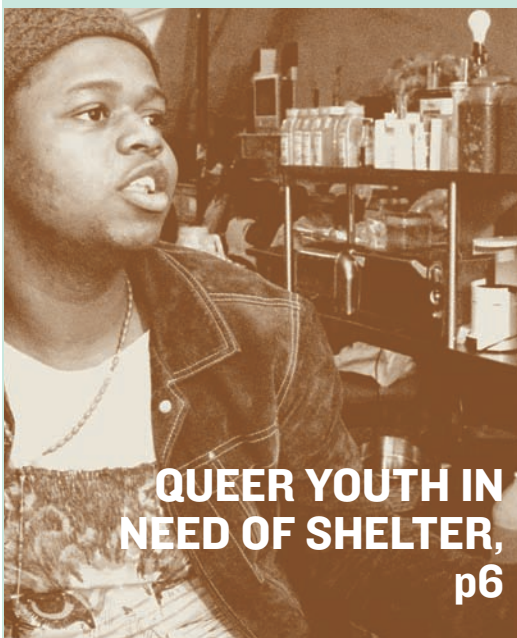


## WHY THEY HATE US

**The Right's Roots of Rage, Obama and Healthcare. Pages 9-13**







THE INDYPENDENT  
P.O. BOX 1417  
NEW YORK, NY 10276

PHONE: 212-221-0521

GENERAL INQUIRIES AND SUBMISSIONS:  
contact@indypendent.org

READER COMMENTS:  
letters@indypendent.org

SUBSCRIPTIONS:  
indypendent.org

DONATE ONLINE:  
indypendent.org/donate

NEWS TIPS:  
news@indypendent.org

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION:  
Arun Gupta: ak Gupta@indypendent.org

GENERAL COORDINATORS:  
Jessica Lee, Elizabeth Henderson

ILLUSTRATIONS COORDINATOR:  
Frank Reynoso: freynoso@indypendent.org

DESIGNERS:  
Ryan Dunsmuir, Anna Gold

INDYKIDS: indykids@indymedia.org

INDYVIDEO: awolf@indypendent.org

PUBLISH YOUR NEWS: nyc.indymedia.org

*The Independent* is a New York-based free newspaper published 17 times a year on Fridays to our print and online readership of more than 100,000. The newspaper is a labor of love by a network of volunteers who do all of the reporting, writing, photography, illustration, editing, designing, distribution, fundraising and website management. Since 2000, more than 600 citizen journalists, artists and media activists have contributed their energy to this project. Winner of dozens of New York Community Media Alliance awards, *The Independent* is dedicated to empowering people to create a true alternative to the corporate press by encouraging people to produce their own media. *The Independent* is funded by subscriptions, donations, grants, merchandise sales, benefits and advertising from organizations with similar missions. We accept submissions that look at news and culture through a critical lens, exploring how systems of power — economic, political and social — affect the lives of ordinary people locally and globally. *The Independent* reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity.

*The Independent* is the newspaper project of the New York City Independent Media Center, which is affiliated with the global Indymedia movement (indymedia.org), an international network that is dedicated to fostering grassroots media production. NYC IMC sponsors three other volunteer projects: the children's newspaper *IndyKids*, the IndyVideo news team and the NYC IMC open publishing website (nyc.indymedia.org).

#### VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTORS:

Sam Alcott, Steven Arnerich, Eleanor Bader, Mark Bailey, Gino Barzizza, Bennett Baumer, Mike Burke, José Carmona, John Cheng, Joel Cook, Kenneth Crab, Ellen Davidson, Carlos Davalos, Soozy Duncan, Seth Fisher, Sophie Forbes, Leo Garcia, Samantha Gorelick, Mary Heglar, Alex Kane, Ruth Kelton, Daisy Lidz, Tom Marczewski, Ana Nogueira, Jaisal Noor, Nicholas Powers, Katrin Redfern, Ramor Ryan, Jacob Scheier, Ann Schneider, Sarah Secunda, Jewell Stewart, John Tarleton, Jimmy Tobias, Danny Valdes, S.M. Vidaurri, Eric Volpe, Steven Wishnia and Amy Wolf.

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK, MYSPACE & TWITTER, AND FOLLOW OUR BLOGGERS ONLINE EVERY DAY AT INDYPENDENT.ORG!

# community calendar

PLEASE SEND EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS TO INDYEVENTS@GMAIL.COM.

## TUE SEPT 22

7:30pm • Free  
FORUM: ECONOMIC RECOVERY? A jobless recovery is no recovery! Is this the future of capitalism or is there another future? Join a discussion by *Counterpunch* co-editor, *Nation* columnist Alexander Cockburn and CUNY professor and author David Harvey. Moderated by bestselling author and host of GRITtv Laura Flanders. Proshansky Auditorium CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Ave lauraflanders.firedoglake.com

## WED SEPT 23

10am-3pm • Free  
RALLY: SAVE THE DELAWARE RIVER! Demand that the Delaware River Basin Commission deny a permit to the Chesapeake Appalachia company, which wants to drill for natural gas using toxic hydraulic fracturing. The Delaware River supplies water to 28 million people, including NYC. Carpool drivers needed. PPL Corporation Wallenpaupack Environmental Learning Center 126 PPL Drive, Hawley, Penn. waterunderattack.com

7pm • \$5/\$7/\$10 Sliding scale  
BOOK RELEASE PARTY: "CLAWING AT THE LIMITS OF COOL" Farah Jasmine Griffin and Salim Washington will read from their new book, *Clawing at the Limits of Cool*. There will be a live music to honor the collaboration between Miles Davis and John Coltrane. Brecht Forum 451 West St (btw Bank and Bethune) brechtforum.org • 212-242-4201

## THU SEPT 24-THU OCT 1

ACTION: WEEK OF ACTION TO DEMAND A REAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY FOR WORKING PEOPLE. One year ago, Congress and the Federal Reserve bailed out Wall Street and the insurers, claiming that they were "too big to fail." Join Jobs With Justice for a week of action to demand accountability and adequate economic support for people who continue to build this country each day. New York City Jobs With Justice 50 Broadway, 16th Fl 212-631-0886 • carrie@nyjwj.org

## THU SEPT 24

7:30pm • Free  
EVENT: "NOTES FROM THE FEMALE REALITY IN MEXICO." A Mexican Independence Day celebration featuring a discussion of this ground-breaking booklet by leaders of the Partido Obrero Socialista (Socialist Workers Party of Mexico). Special commentary by Rocío Duque of the publication *Cuadernos*

*Feministas (Feminist Notebooks)*. Hosted by Radical Women. Mexican supper available for \$8 donation. Childcare provided. 212-222-0633 nycradicalwomen@nyct.net

## THU SEPT 24

7pm • Free  
DISCUSSION: CRISIS IN DARFUR: TWO SCHOLARS, TWO VIEWPOINTS by Mahmood Mamdani, professor of Government and Anthropology at Columbia University, and Ali B. Ali-Dinar, outreach director of the African Studies Center at the University of Pennsylvania. Sponsored by Brooklyn for Peace. Brooklyn Friends Meeting House 110 Schermerhorn (at Boerum Place) 718-642-5291 darfur@brooklynpeace.org

7pm • \$5 Suggested Donation  
READING: BOTH SIDES OF THE WATER. Author Lonnie Harrington reads from *Both Sides of the Water: Essays on African-Native American Interactions*, which examines the historic relationship between indigenous people of the Western Hemisphere and people of African descent. Bluestockings 172 Allen St (btw Stanton & Rivington) 212-777-6028 • bluestockings.com

## FRI SEPT 25

7:30pm  
FILM: *RETHINK AFGHANISTAN*. Robert Greenwald, of Brave New Films, directs this documentary with interviews from the United States, Afghanistan and Russia, explaining the issues surrounding this war and why we need greater congressional oversight. Sponsored by Veterans for Peace NYC Chapter. All Saints Episcopal Church 43-12 46th St Sunnyside, Queens Bob Keilbach, 718-358-8568 rakmet@msn.com

6:30pm • \$10  
PERFORMANCE: YOUR UGLY, UGLY WAYS by . Womack. This staged reading presented by Lesbian Cinema Arts explores how a mother acts when her daughter becomes attracted to the new woman in the neighborhood. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center 208 W 13th St 212-620-7310 • gaycenter.org

## SAT SEPT 26

10am-7:30pm • Free  
CONFERENCE: BIRTH AND REBIRTH OF A NATION. Where does the country

# SEPT-OCT



The San Francisco earthquake, 1906.

## WED OCT 7, 7pm • READING: THE JOY BRED BY DISASTER.

Author Rebecca Solnit reads from *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities that Arise Out of Disaster*, which chronicles how in the wake of major disaster, including Sept. 11, a wave of altruistic, generous and brave behavior shapes peoples' experience, rather than selfishness, chaos and hate that the media and authorities says happens. Bluestockings, 172 Allen St • 212-777-6028 • bluestockings.com

stand today on issues of race and representation in the media and beyond? New School, Tishman Auditorium 66 W 12th St 212-229-2436 • vlc@newschool.edu

2pm • Free  
WORKSHOP: EMOTIONAL SIDE OF HEALTHY LIVING teaches us that unmanaged stress and toxic emotions are as destructive to health as poor food choices and pollution. Park Slope Food Coop 782 Union St, Bklyn 718-622-0560 • foodcoop.com

5:30pm • Free  
BENEFIT: PUP CRAWL. The First Annual Brooklyn Bridge Pup Crawl encourages folks with dogs to walk the Brooklyn Bridge to raise money to feed pets left behind in home foreclosures. Proceeds to benefit the Brooklyn Animal Rescue Coalition. Meet at City Hall Park thepupcrawl@gmail.com

## THU OCT 1

7pm • Free  
FORUM: SEXUALITY AND SOCIALISM. Author/activist Sherry Wolf discusses history and theory of LGBT oppression and liberation. Sponsored by Haymarket Books. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center 208 W 13th St 212-620-7310 • gaycenter.org

## FRI OCT 2

10pm • Free  
EVENT: CENTRAL PARK MOONLIT RIDE. Join Times Up! for a charming ride

through Central Park. Meet at Columbus Circle (SW corner of Central Park) times-up.org

## SUN OCT 4

7pm • \$5 Suggested Donation  
READING: HISTORY OF COOPERATION. Author John Curl will read from his book, *For All the People: Uncovering the Hidden History of Cooperation, Cooperative Movements, and Communalism in America*. Bluestockings, 172 Allen St, (btw Stanton & Rivington) 212-777-6028 • bluestockings.com

## TUE OCT 6

7pm • \$5 Suggested Donation  
READING: *UNMARKETABLE*. Author Anne Elizabeth-Moore will read from her book, *Unmarketable: Brandalism, Copyfighting, Mocketing, and the Erosion of Integrity*, which examines the corrosive effects of corporate infiltration into underground culture(s). Bluestockings 172 Allen St (btw Stanton & Rivington) 212-777-6028 • bluestockings.com

## THU OCT 15

7:30pm • Free  
FORUM: DEBATING CAPITALISTS' POWER IN THE AGE OF OBAMA. Longtime activists Tom Hayden, Stanley Anonowitz and Cindy Milstein talk strategies for the progressive left. Sponsored by the Left Forum. Community Church of New York 40 E 35th St 212-817-2003 • leftforum.org/events

## READER COMMENTS

Post your own comments online at *indypendent.org* at the end of each article or email the editors at *letters@indypendent.org*.

## CAMPAIGN FOR CHANGE

*Responses to "Mayoral Election: Can I Get an AMEN?!", Aug. 14:*

I am one of those who have been petitioning to get Rev. Billy [Talen] on the ballot and it has been an exhilarating experience to support someone who is running to win on the issues I care about. Bloomberg may be able to cover the city with con-

sultants, ads and mailers but he cannot buy my vote! —ANN LINK

Tony Avella is a good man. But working for him is a waste of time, because the Democratic Party is where progressive activism goes to die. Avella will not be in the general election, because he is participating in a process that rewards money and connections over ideas. Billy Talen will be in the general election, giving millions of voters the chance to vote their values. He'll have a greater impact, by showing politicians that they need to adopt progres-

sive positions or lose votes in the general election. And he'll help build the Green Party, an independent progressive party based on nonviolence, social justice, grassroots democracy and sustainability, into a force in New York City politics. —DAVE S.

## TAKING A STAND

*Response to "Coming Up For Air: A Review of Arm the Spirit," Aug. 14:*

It is growing very apparent that we have a situation in the United States where courageous citizens

have risked life and liberty to successfully oppose government policies that ran contrary to our national belief in life, liberty and freedom. Their continued persecution is the result of misinformation campaigns by the very criminals who have drawn America into unwanted and unjustified war. The loss of American lives and the lives of the nations we invade is our shame. When will someone make the war machine accountable?

—BO SEWELL

Continued on page 19

*After more than nine years of The Independent, we've learned to emphasize a simple rule of good reporting: Get to the point.*

# THE INDYPENDENT is on the financial brink and we need your help.

## IMMEDIATELY.

To continue publishing — and to make sure we can celebrate 10 years of groundbreaking, award-winning reporting next year — **we need to raise \$15,000.**

We need all our supporters, like you, to give what they can. We don't need much — but we need it right now.

*Without your contribution, we can't print a paper, train new journalists, or even host a website.* Our award-winning articles, illustrations and design depend on your support, and we need your help today.

As a supporter of independent journalism, you know how important it is to have voices that tell the truth, voices that are not compromised by corporate dollars or politicians' agendas.

Locally, nationally and internationally, *The Independent* covers the stories you won't read anywhere else. This is citizen journalism at its finest. We are a community paper for the global community, written by volunteers from around the world.

But we cannot continue without your help.

\$50 allows us to print an additional 100 papers. \$100 allows us to provide journalism workshops and internships, training new writers. Every \$20 sustaining monthly gift helps with the overhead necessary for bills, equipment and rent.

**Visit [indypendent.org](http://indypendent.org) today** to make a donation, or mail the coupon below to The Independent, P.O. Box 1417, New York, NY 10276.

- ☐ I would like to make a sustaining donation to *The Independent* of: ☐ \$30/month ☐ \$20/month ☐ \$10/month ☐ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month.  
☐ I would like to make a one-time contribution of: ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Suite/Apt \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

☐ My check payable to *The Independent* is enclosed. ☐ Please bill me later.

☐ Please charge my credit card:

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp \_\_\_\_\_ Card Code \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Every gift of \$50 or more comes with a 2-issue sample subscription for a friend or family member who might not be reading *The Independent* yet.





BY BENNETT BAUMER

**T**he battle for rent reform is coming to a head in the New York State Senate, exposing rifts in the Democratic conference. Democrats hold a tenuous 32–30 majority in the senate, but their ranks are fractured into different camps, making the passage of so-called “controversial” legislation difficult.

At a Sept. 10 senate special session, 150 tenants urged their Democratic allies to get behind a package of rent reforms that passed the State Assembly earlier this year. On this day, they had hoped to see the senate pass S2641, a bill that would prevent landlords from evicting tenants from more than one apartment for personal or family use. However, the bill had been withdrawn the day before after Sens. Carl Kruger (D-Brooklyn) and Martin Dilan (D-Brooklyn) voiced opposition. The vote on S2641 was supposed to be a “practice run” for repealing vacancy decontrol, a rule that lets landlords deregulate vacant rent-stabilized apartments if the monthly rent can legally be \$2,000 or more.

Kruger’s campaign war chest is well stocked, thanks in large part to real estate interests that appreciate the support. Tenant advocates say that Kruger, a conservative politician from a largely Russian southern Brooklyn district, fears any potential Russian challengers and thus ingratiates himself with the powerful landlord lobby to maintain his seat. He has also verbally sparred with tenant advocates in Albany and ducked behind closed doors to escape chanting tenants who lined Albany corridors Sept. 10. He is allied with conservative Latino senators like Dilan and Ruben Diaz, Jr. (D-Bronx), an evangelical minister who opposes marriage equality, and former senate coup leader Pedro Espada, Jr. (D-Bronx).

In a small victory for tenants, it appears that former coup leader Espada and Jeff Klein (D-Bronx, Westchester) were inclined to vote for S2641 Sept. 10. Klein is closely aligned with two white senators, Craig Johnson (D-Nassau) and Diane Savino (D-Staten Island/South Brooklyn) and has tepidly offered his support for rent reform. His group is known by many tenants as the “white guys.”

Tenants will rely heavily on the so-called “Manhattan liberals,” (Senators Tom Duane, Liz Krueger, David Squadron and Eric Schneiderman), as well as progressives in the Black and Latino caucuses to pass rent reform, which they hope to bring to the table at a special session to be held in late September or early October.

*Bennett Baumer works as a tenant organizer on the West Side of Manhattan.*

## LOCAL



# Rainforest Rescue

**HIGH CRIMES:** Tim Keating, executive director of Rainforest Relief, is troubled by the use of Amazonian tropical hardwood in the High Line Park.  
**PHOTO:** SOPHIE FORBES

BY JESSICA LEE AND JOHN CHENG

**T**he elevated High Line Park — lined with native grasses and lounging urbanites — seems to have lifted the Meat Packing District to a near heavenly status.

But people like Tim Keating are working to bring New Yorkers back to reality.

When Keating, the executive director of Rainforest Relief, walks the High Line he points out the ipê wood that was used to construct the park’s decking, bleacher seating, chaise lounges and benches. That’s right. New York’s trendiest new park was constructed through the destruction of the Amazon rainforest.

“The use of ipê is mostly for aesthetics,” says the organization Rainforest Relief on its website. “Apparently, Friends [of the High Line] designers care more for their accolades than they do for the death of Earth’s most diverse ecosystems or the murder and displacement of indigenous people at the hands of illegal loggers.”

Ipê is a term that groups together seven hardwood tree species, which are heavily logged in Brazil and Peru. According to Rainforest Relief, the trees do not grow in high densities — only one or two individual trees per acre — so an estimated 28 other

trees are cut just to harvest one ipê tree. The market for quality wood is the primary factor leading to Amazon deforestation.

Friends of High Line Park defend their choice of wood for Section 1 of the project, which extends from Gansevoort to West 20th Street, claiming that “the ipê wood used on the High Line was chosen for its longevity and durability, and taken from a managed forest certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), which is recognized for creating and enforcing the world’s strongest standards for forest management.”

However, Rainforest Relief and sister group Rainforests of New York claim that the FSC certification process is “riddled with controversy,” pointing to cases of FSC-approved old-growth forest logging in South America and to Brazil, where a non-violent, grassroots campaign of indigenous people and campesinos rose up against an FSC-certified plantation.

Rainforest Relief says it is asking Friends of the High Line to consider several longer-lasting alternatives to ipê for Section 2 of the project, which will extend the walkway to 30th Street and is slated to be completed in 2010. Among the options are recycled plastic lumber, sustainably logged black locust trees and previously cut ipê logs that are submerged in the Panama Canal for preservation. Ipê can

show signs of deformity after 20 years, while recycled plastic lumber can last a century.

New York City is the largest municipal importer of tropical hardwood in North America. Rainforests of New York estimates that the city’s boardwalks alone have been responsible for the felling of at least 125,000 acres of the Amazonian Rainforest. Rainforest advocates have been petitioning Mayor Michael Bloomberg for years to curb the city’s use of tropical hardwood.

Bloomberg called for a 60 percent reduction in the city’s use of rainforest wood by 2020 in a February 2008 speech to the U. N. General Assembly. “New Yorkers don’t live in the rainforest. But we do live in a world that we all share. And we’re committed to doing everything we can to protect it for all of our children.”

The environmentalists remain hopeful, yet skeptical. “With newly proposed marine transfer stations, miles-long renovations of Hudson River Park and dozens of other projects — none of which are counted in his [Bloomberg’s] reduction plan — NYC is actually geared to double its consumption of tropical hardwoods,” Rainforests of New York said.

“We can design public parks, but we cannot design a rainforest,” said Rainforest Relief member Tim Doody.

## STELLA D’ORO WORKERS BATTLE THE BUYOUT

BY JESSICA LEE

**I**t seems that the Bronx produces some tough cookies.

The 136 workers at the Stella D’oro Biscuit Co. say they will not back down in the battle to save their jobs that disappear in early October.

After a June 30 ruling by the National Labor Relations Board gave the workers victory in an 11-month strike over proposed wage cuts, they are now fighting to keep the company’s owner, Connecticut-based private equity firm Brynwood Partners, from shuttering the Bronx factory and moving their jobs out of state.

Brynwood announced Sept. 9 that it would sell the Italian biscuit brand to snack food giant Lance, Inc., which plans to make Stella D’oro products in a non-union factory in Ashland, Ohio. The sale is currently pending.

“I will do anything possible to stop the sale,” said Mike Filippou, the lead strike organizer who worked at the factory as a mechanic for the last 15 years. “We have to show other people that

we will fight and not leave these investors, who want to make a quick dollar, to ruin our lives.”

Filippou, however, is already out of work after being fired by Brynwood Sept. 15, a termination he feels was in retaliation for his strike role.

Micah Landau, with the Committee in Support of the Stella D’oro Strikers, says that a large community is ready to stand behind the workers. Just three days after receiving notice of the pending sale and loss of their jobs,



Mike Filippou. PHOTO: JOEL COOK

Landau said that about 50 workers and 80 supporters marched in the New York City Labor Day Parade and received applause from the labor supporters who lined the street.

“We were cheered the entire way,” Landau said.

A rally is planned for Sept. 25 at the headquarters of Goldman Sachs, a major investor in Lance, Inc. The group will then march to City Hall to encourage the City Council to take action to save the Bronx jobs. The council passed a non-binding resolution July 29 in support of the Stella workers.

“We now need the Council to come through in a material way,” Landau said.

“They cannot make the cookies without us,” Filippou said. “We need to fight and do everything we can to stop the sale. It’s like the Yankees. When you think Stella D’oro, you think right away, the Bronx.”

*For more information, see stelladorostrike.com.*



# Students Armed with New Anti-Recruiter Regulations

BY JAISAL NOOR

When high school senior Ciarra Boyd recently persuaded her friend to not join the U.S. military, she got something she was not expecting: an irate call from her friend's recruiter.

Boyd, who lives in the South Bronx and attends Urban Academy High School on Manhattan's East Side, says she was deeply shaken by the experience.

"He [the recruiter] is yelling at me on the phone, 'You need to mind your business. He's a man, he can make his own decisions. You're lucky I don't know where you live,'" said Boyd, a member of the Ya-Ya Network, a student-driven organization involved in "counter-recruiting," or stopping teens from joining the military.

New regulations by New York City Department of Education Chancellor Joel Klein announced earlier this year hope to monitor U.S. military recruiters who focus on courting high school students. Under the new rules, which take effect this semester, recruiters will be banned from using class time for presentations and all 9th to 12th grade students will be given forms to opt out of the provision in the No Child Left Behind Act, which automatically releases students' contact information to recruiters.

"I don't want to just be fed a whole bunch of lies and possibly die in Iraq," said Tracy Hobbs, a Flatbush senior who attends Metropolitan High School in Brownsville. Hobbs is also a member of the Ya-Ya Network.

Also under the new mandate, each school must create and publicize a procedure to report recruiter misconduct, and select a school official to coordinate these efforts. Schools will also be prohibited from automatically releasing test scores and contact information to the military for students who have taken the

Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test (ASVAB).

A report on student experiences with recruiters that was released by the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) and Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer in 2007 charges that the city's Department of Education (DOE) has failed to protect students' rights.

Of the 1,000 students surveyed in the report, 40 percent did not receive opt-out forms at the beginning of the school year, and 45 percent were unfamiliar with the procedure for reporting recruiter misconduct.

While optimistic, many advocates are concerned about how the rules and grievance procedure will be implemented. Ya-Ya Network Executive Director Amy Wagner says enforcing the new regulations will be difficult if students, parents and teachers are not aware of them.

There has been so little press coverage of the new rules that when *The Independent* contacted two different military recruiter spokespeople, it appeared neither knew the regulations existed.

While this policy change is the result of six years of lobbying efforts by the NYCLU, the Students or Soldiers? Coalition and other community groups, many still worry that these changes will be inadequate to prevent teens from enlisting.

Advocates are concerned that the rules will not affect how the military disproportionately targets poorer and minority communities. According to the American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker social justice organization, lower-income neighborhoods, such as the South Bronx, East New York and Flatbush, have higher rates of military recruitment, while more affluent areas have lower rates.

While recruiting rates had dropped in recent years, the economic recession, however,

has forced many people, like Dan Brown, to reconsider enlisting. Brown said he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps at the Brooklyn Heights recruiting station in mid-September after looking for a job for five months. In the first six months of 2009, the military reported that it exceeded its active duty recruitment goals by 5 percent.

According to the progressive think tank National Priorities Project, in 2008 52 percent of U.S. Army recruits were under the age of 21, and 82 percent were 24 and under. The Army accounts for nearly half of total recruiting numbers.

While the new rules will make it more difficult for the military to contact students, the military collects information in many other ways, including data mining, online career

tests, video games and marketing software.

With more than 260,000 high school students, New York City is the largest school district in the country. Advocates hope that Klein's regulations will serve as an example for others districts and they plan to hold DOE accountable. Currently only a handful of other cities, including Los Angeles and Portland, Ore., limit recruitment efforts in schools.

"Advocates, community members, students, we are all looking this year to see if the DOE is actually going to live up to its word and implement this policy," said Ari Rosmarin, the NYCLU's senior advocacy coordinator.

For more information, visit [nyclu.org](http://nyclu.org).



**SIGN ME UP:** Dan Brown, 20, enlisted at a U.S. Marine recruiting station in Brooklyn Heights in mid-September after a five-month long job search. Brown, a Jamaican immigrant, said that one of the advantages of enlisting was receiving U.S. citizenship. PHOTO: JAISAL NOOR

Worried about  
Climate Change?

Don't sweat it.

We are America's largest companies, and we have a plan to save you from the wide range of catastrophes that are likely to come from our increasingly unstable climate.

While others look to Senate bills or UN accords for a climate solution, we look to our best engineers.

And our expert team has come up with a solution in perfect accord with our values.

Technological. Profitable. And, dare we say, *beautiful*.

**SurvivaBall** is nothing less than a self-contained living system—truly, a gated community for one. If you have a SurvivaBall, even if everyone else is dying, at least *you* can weather all storms.

Exclusive? You bet. So start saving now.

Your Money *and* Your Life.™  
[www.survivaball.com](http://www.survivaball.com)

**Product Demos Daily!**

October 7 - 20

Times: 1, 2:45, 4:15, 6, 8, and 10pm

Film Forum Exhibition Hall  
West Houston Street,  
just west of 6th Ave.

Tickets Required:  
[survivaball.com/demo](http://survivaball.com/demo)



**SURVIVABALL**  
MODEL X7



# A Forgotten Youth

By JIMMY TOBIAS

Across the United States, thousands of kids are kicked out of their homes each year for being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). In some cases, homophobic families dump them on the streets like litter. In other homes, kids run away in fear of retribution or as a result of ridicule.

They have nowhere to go. And the problem grows worse as American youth are “coming out” at increasingly early ages.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 575,000 to 1.6 million homeless and runaway youth are living on the streets from New York City to Los Angeles. Of these, between 20 and 40 percent are LGBT, according to the 2007 seminal study, “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth: An Epidemic of Homelessness” by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF).

The study highlights a particularly dismal fact: Given that between 3 percent and 5 percent of the U.S. population identifies as lesbian, gay or bisexual, it is clear that LGBT youth experience homelessness at a hugely disproportionate rate.

LGBT youth homelessness is a hidden reality of 21st-century America. The stories of despair, high HIV rates and street murders continue to be under-reported and unaddressed. I wanted to know who these kids were and how they survived in New York City. That is what took me to Sylvia’s Place.

## BELOW-GROUND HAVEN

Nestled in the heart of Chelsea is a small safe haven on Eighth Avenue. A rusty iron gate closed behind me as I stepped into Sylvia’s Place on a recent Monday evening. Located in the basement of the Metropolitan Community Church of New York, the space was filled with clutter: old mail, hand-me-down clothes, boxes of donated food and cold metal chairs. There were no windows, but harsh lights kept it bright. A single bathroom provided a semblance of privacy. Brazil, a young transgender woman, saw me eyeing it. “If you go in there, don’t sit down,” she said.

The shelter is named for Sylvia Rivera, the legendary transgender woman said to have thrown the high heel that sparked the Stonewall riots 40 years ago.

Sylvia’s Place is one of three organizations in New York City that provides overnight shelter exclusively for LGBT homeless youth. Twenty-five to 30 kids sleep on the cold cement floor at Sylvia’s Place every night, packed together and exposed to roaches. Still, it is better than shelters for straight kids, where LGBT youth often face verbal and physical abuse. It is better than the street.

Hip-hop music blared from the speakers. A few volunteers were cooking dinner in a makeshift kitchen. Diggy, from the Bronx, danced flamboyantly in the middle of the floor, belting out song lyrics. A chubby teenager with bright purple hair was drunk and sobbing in the corner. “I want to get clean,” he cried softly, as his friend stood out on the sidewalk, calling to him through the front door, pressuring him to take another swig. Aqua Starr, the newest kid to take up residence at the shelter, was stoned and eating cold turkey stuffing and pizza by himself, leaning on a row of cabinets and eyeing me from a distance.

I sat down next to Chris Collazo, the 25-



**A PLACE TO STAY, BUT NOT A HOME:** Sylvia’s Place, a shelter for homeless LGBT youth located in Chelsea, is a place to go for teens like T.T. Wilson, who left home in North Carolina after not being accepted by her family. PHOTO: MARK BAILEY

year-old drop-in coordinator at Sylvia’s.

“If you want the kids to open up, show empathy,” Collazo told me. “Then you won’t be able to get them to stop talking.”

Across the room Damien Corallo slouched in a chair, looking grim. Somebody had stolen his iPod. “Things are always getting stolen here,” he said. I sat down next to him and, just as Collazo had said, once I got him talking, he did not want to stop. When he was a kid, his father was sent to jail and his mother sent him and his two siblings from San Juan, Puerto Rico, to New York City to live with his aunt. His brother was gay and Damien, who is transgender, had been dressing like a boy as long as he could remember.

“One day our aunt told us she didn’t want any faggots in the house. And we figured out that she had given our rights over to the state. So we left,” Corallo said. “I’ve lived in 32 group homes or foster homes. I’ve lived in shelters, halfway houses, safety houses. I’ve been into lock-up, stuck in residential. I have been in every kind of home. I went to juvie for drugs. I used to inject drugs and snort coke. I was in for about a year. It was not friendly. It was a Missouri state jail and then I went to rehab.”

Corallo said he stayed in a group home on Long Island. Three years ago he moved to Sylvia’s, where he’s been ever since. On three occasions, he’s been beaten in what he described as “gay bashings.” He’s been called a faggot and a freak more times than he would like to remember. Somewhere along the line he contracted HIV, which has since turned into AIDS. He has attempted suicide more than once, and he relapsed, too — he’s got track marks up and down his arms and a chronic twitch. He is using crystal methamphetamines and heroin again. He said he wants to break the habit, but “I could never stay clean in this situation.” Corallo is 18 years old.

My first evening at Sylvia’s ended with a speech from T.T. Wilson, a 23 year old with purple hair who had just been suspended from the shelter for three days because she had been in a street fight outside. “At the end of the day, y’all can go home to y’all’s moth-

erfuckin’ houses and y’all can sleep in your own fuckin’ bed regardless if y’all strugglin’ with your bills or not!” she screamed at the staff. “Y’all have a fuckin’ home. I don’t. I don’t have anywhere to go. So what am I gonna do? What am I gonna do?!”

## A REFUGE ON THE RIVER

Pier 45, at the west end of Christopher Street, is the epicenter of LGBT youth life, especially for kids of color who travel from neighborhoods around the city. Tucked in the Hudson River Park on the edge of New York’s expensive and trendy Greenwich Village, it is where many youth gather during the day to pass the time, meet friends and organize around issues of gentrification, youth and LGBT rights. It is something like a home.

“This is a place that folks come to feel safe. You can meet other people and start to feel comfortable in your own skin,” said Desire Marshall, a 25-year-old organizer with FIERCE, a group that advocates for LGBT youth of color. “There are few places you can go when you’re young and there are even fewer places you can go when

you’re queer.”

The pier is one of them, but it too is threatened.

In 2001, the Hudson River Park Trust — a public-private partnership that governs the park — closed Pier 45 for renovation. The LGBT youth that use the pier were not consulted about the plans and many feared that they would have no place to congregate on a revamped, gentrified pier.

Their fears were well founded. When the pier was re-opened in 2003, it had changed dramatically.

“For two years they had nowhere to go,” said Marshall. “Now they reopen it with a curfew that wasn’t here before, with a police presence that wasn’t here, with park enforcement patrol that wasn’t here, and food that LGBTQ youth and low-income people cannot afford. They are pushing out a huge part of the community that utilizes this space.”

FIERCE’s fight to protect Pier 45 from exclusionary development continues today as the Hudson River Park fishes around for more proposals to improve what it calls “quality of life” along the river.

## IN NEW YORK CITY ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT:

**3,800** youth under 24 years old are homeless.

**1,600** youth are sleeping on the street, in an abandoned building, at a transportation site, or in a car, bus or train.

**150** children spend the night with a sex work client.

**28 %** of homeless youth identify as LGBT and another 11% are unsure of or unwilling to identify their sexual orientation.

**45 %** of homeless youth are on the street because they have been thrown out of their home or are runaways.

**40 %** of homeless youth have spent time in the juvenile justice system or in jail or prison.

Source: “The New York City 2007 Homeless Youth Survey.” Empire State Coalition of Youth and Family Services.



# New York City Queer Homeless Youth Survive at the Bottom of the Barrel.

## THE RIVERSIDE STROLL

While Pier 45 is safe during the day, at night it turns into something entirely different: a center of commerce where sex workers and drug dealers, many of them homeless and queer, come to make money, to “get coin.” They call it “the stroll.”

One afternoon Wilson invited me to come with her to see the stroll. She’d been back from her suspension for at least a week and we’d already spent a good deal of time together at Sylvia’s Place. She told me that she grew up in a well-off con-

“I know my mommy likes me, I know she loves me, but I was never peaceful,” Wilson said. “My family don’t accept me for being gay. They don’t accept gay people period.”

When Wilson came to New York, she found a new family — four trusted friends. As the oldest among them, she called them her children and they called her their mother. LGBT homeless youth frequently piece together families for protection and support on the streets. Corallo had one as well. “Me and my friends developed a kind of

battle against homophobia, gender discrimination, racism, class — and they have the scars to prove it.

Carl Siciliano knows the depths of these wounds. As the executive director of the Ali Forney Center (AFC), an organization that provides emergency and transitional housing to LGBT homeless youth in New York City, he is a witness to this struggle.

“I don’t think there is any other situation where so much oppression and persecution and cruelty is happening to people because they’re gay,” Siciliano said as we drove to

200 beds for 20,000 kids? Obviously we are not stepping up to the plate.”

Siciliano and politicians like New York City Councilmember Lewis Fidler (D-Brooklyn) — who have spearheaded the effort to get city funding for programs that serve LGBT homeless youth — have ideas on how to solve the crisis. They propose two broad solutions: First, combat homophobia. Second, while homophobia still exists, generate the political will to care for kids who fall prey to it.

A study cited in the NGLTF report found that 50 percent of young gay males experienced a negative reaction from their parents when they came out and 26 percent were told to leave home. In addition, one-third of all LGBT youth are assaulted by a parent or another family member after disclosing their sexual orientation.

Along with homophobia, class and poverty are part of the problem. “People from affluent backgrounds have more options and resources,” Sicilian said. “They face the same rejection, but when half of your extended family is already living under one roof with you, so close to the street anyway, there is a lot less of a buffer zone.”

The confluence of homophobia and poverty puts kids on the streets and keeps them there.

“I have stood on the steps and declared war on homelessness. I have done as much as I can to raise awareness,” Fidler said. “And still, Brittany [Spears] can climb into a cab without underwear and get three pages in the paper, but I can’t get three columns on kids who are couch surfing, who are selling their bodies to survive, who are exposed to unspeakable horrors.”

Fidler believes the only way to truly address the issue is through a mass social movement. “My belief is that if people knew that on the streets of this city in this day there are children by the hundreds who are sleeping on the streets, if this problem were known, then the public would create the political will to solve it.”

Meanwhile, however, young people like Damien Corallo will remain on the margins. “A lot of us feel rejected, like there is no place for us,” Corallo said. “We’re the bottom of the barrel.”



**NIGHT LIFE:** Pier 45, at the west end of Christopher Street, is claimed by LGBT youth, such as T.T. Wilson, looking to build community. At night, people gather at the pier to trade drugs and sex for money. PHOTO: MARK BAILEY

servative community in North Carolina. When she came out to her family about her transgender identity, however, a conflict developed with her mother. Eventually, she left North Carolina for New York City two years ago.

homeless runaway family,” he said. “When we didn’t have a place to go we would all sleep together at Union Square at night.”

I joined Wilson and her family on the pier one late rainy Saturday night to watch the stroll. Teenagers slowly walked up and down the sidewalks, strutting, making fleeting eye contact to draw in potential customers. Many of them were transgender, most were youth of color.

The occasional catcall and rowdy laughter blended in with the rain spattering the sidewalk and the buzz of cars on the West Side Highway. “If you watch closely, you’ll start to see people disappearing into the bathrooms,” Wilson said. To our left, a drug dealer in a baggy purple shirt stood on a corner with two others, hollering at people and peddling dime bags and joints for dollars.

Wilson explained that survival sex fuels the stroll. Many of the kids do it to eat or because they need a place to stay for the night and a stranger’s bed is better than a cold, wet bench at Union Square. Others do it because they are saving up for a sex change operation or to feed a drug habit. According to the 2007 NGLTF report, LGBT homeless youth are three times more likely to engage in survival sex than their heterosexual homeless peers.

## ON THE FRONTLINES

Sylvia’s youth live on the frontlines of the

Brooklyn to see a pair of AFC apartments. “These kids are bearing the brunt of homophobia in our society.”

Siciliano has been working with LGTB youth since the mid-1990s. “Every couple of months one of our kids would get murdered on the streets,” Siciliano said. “They were just in this ground zero of danger.” Ali Forney, a gay and transgender youth and the namesake of Siciliano’s organization, was killed in 1997. He was found on Harlem’s 135th early one winter morning with a bullet in his head.

With the help of a committed staff, Siciliano has turned a project that began in 2002 into the largest organization of its kind in the nation. His program offers counseling and mentoring services as well as a network of eight apartments that house 48 youth on any given night.

And it works. Every year his organization weans a new cohort of kids off drugs and sends a handful to college. And they receive a little more funding. But the waiting list is long. The program is successful, but it is simply not enough.

As Siciliano himself admits, the gay rights movement and its allies are failing to address the problem. “I don’t think there are 200 beds in the country for gay youth,” he says. “If there are more than 1,000 gay youth on the streets in New York, there has got to be at least 20,000 in the country. And that is a conservative estimate. So

## IN THE UNITED STATES:

**575,000–1.6 MILLION** youth are homeless each year.

**20–40%** of homeless youth identify as LGBT.

**26%** of youth who come out to their parents as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender are kicked out of their homes.

**25–33%** of all homeless youth have engaged in survival sex.

**42%** of lesbian, gay and bisexual youth abuse alcohol.

**NEARLY 50%** of LGBT homeless youth have attempted suicide.

Source: “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth: An Epidemic of Homelessness.” National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (2007).

## NEW YORK CITY RESOURCES

### ALI FORNEY CENTER

212-222-3427 • aliforneycenter.org

### SYLVIA’S PLACE

212-629-7440  
homelessyouthservices.org

### GREEN CHIMNEYS

718-732-1501 • greenchimneys.org

### FIERCE

646-336-6789 • fiercenyc.org

### EMPIRE STATE COALITION OF YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

718-237-2722 • empirestatecoalition.org



## Healthcare Movement Loses One of Its Own

BY ARUN GUPTA

Tireless, brilliant, determined, creative — this is how many people describe Marilyn Clement, who died Aug. 3. Though accurate, these terms do not do her justice.

Clement was a hero to many. She had a lifelong commitment to radical politics that stemmed from a deep sense of justice. She always radiated enthusiasm and had a fearlessness, not of the foolhardy, but of someone who did not quail before state power.

Born in Tulia, Texas, in 1935, Clement recalled in 2003, “My parents were sharecroppers and people of faith. ... The United Methodist Church challenged me as a youth and trained me to work for the common good.” Working for the common good, she said, is a “wonderful way to spend a lifetime.”

Her life reads like a history of the left. Her organizing began with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in the 1960s, where she worked with civil rights leaders in-

cluding Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

She went on to join the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization and serve as the executive director of the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) from 1976 to 1989. While at CCR, she helped found the Anti-Klan Network, which worked to “counter Klan and Nazi terrorism.”

During the 1990s, she worked with the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom and the African National Congress and began her healthcare organizing. Earlier this decade, she founded Healthcare-NOW, the leading national advocate for single-payer healthcare.

Arguing that healthcare should be a human right, she framed it as a new civil rights movement.

She probably would not be surprised that the Democrats may actually make the healthcare system worse. The Obama administration wants to steal from publicly funded healthcare and divert the revenues to private insurers, HMOs and pharmaceutical companies.

Despite how mightily Clement fought, she was unable to get the single-payer movement to use the tactics of the civil rights movement, to nonviolently disrupt the system so that enacting universal single-payer healthcare was the less painful choice for the government.

But Clement would not have wallowed in despair. She was certain that we would eventually win.

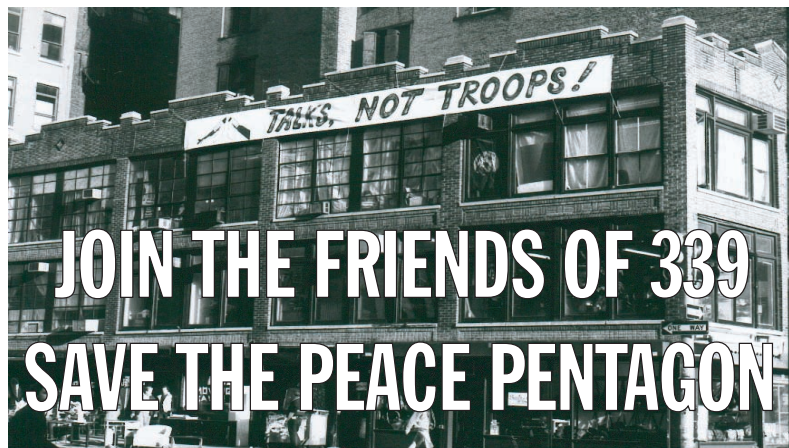
Even as her life was winding down, and as her congregation celebrated her life in June, she wasn’t interested in the spotlight. Her concern was always about organizing for change and nurturing new generations of activists.

Quoting Dr. King, Clement told her congregation, “The arc of history is long, but it bends toward justice.”

*A memorial service for Marilyn Clement will be held at Judson Memorial Church Oct. 17 at 1 pm.*



PHOTO: HEALTHCARE-NOW



**339 Lafayette a hub of NYC peace and social justice activism for 40 years is threatened and needs your support.**

A recent engineering survey confirms that the building, a historic epicenter of the NYC non-violent social justice movement, is in need of extensive repairs. Your contribution **NOW** will send a strong message that there is broad and enthusiastic community support for saving this landmark building. To ensure that the building is not sold, we ask you to give generously in order to lay a strong foundation upon which a large capital campaign can be built.

**Contributions made before Sept 30 will be increased by 50%**

The Friends of 339 believe that the building can be a high-profile center for peace and justice and a sign of resistance to the excessive consumption and gentrification of Manhattan. We have launched an **INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN COMPETITION** to imagine a Peace Pentagon that supports the work of peace activists in a sustainable building. The goal is to connect with the neighborhood’s rich history of activism and art and leverage the strategic location in the heart of NYC.

**FIND OUT MORE! JOIN OUR MAILING LIST!**

**friendsof339@gmail.com**

**peacepentagon.org**

Mail checks payable to AJ Muste Institute to

Friends of 339 c/o 339 Lafayette Street NY, NY 10012 or make donations online at [ajmuste.org](http://ajmuste.org)

**PLEASE MAKE SURE TO DESIGNATE ALL DONATIONS for “STRUCTURAL SURVEY.”**

## Cleaning Up



**ON HER OWN SCHEDULE:** We Can Do It! cooperative member Alicia Chávez cleans a staircase in Fort Greene, Brooklyn. PHOTO: CARLOS DAVALOS

BY CARLOS DAVALOS

After 18 years of working low-wage jobs at factories and bakeries in Brooklyn, Alicia Chávez finally found an employer that pays her a living wage: herself.

Chávez, 34, is the president of the We Can Do It! Women’s Cooperative, a worker-owned and -run housecleaning business. Founded in 2006, it currently has 24 members and is one of only a handful of cooperatives in New York City.

“The members of the co-op are not employees, we are owners of our own business and we conduct it as we please,” Chávez said.

Before joining the We Can Do It! cooperative, Chávez worked more than 40 hours a week, earning \$350. She can now earn the same amount of money in half that time, allowing her more time to take care of her three children — Victor, 16; Santiago, 10; and José, 2 — and read contemporary Mexican novels in her spare time.

In addition to receiving equal pay and being able to set their own schedules, cooperative members vote on all organizational decisions. The cooperative is supported by the Center for Family Life, a social service organization based in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, which provides administrative support and meeting space.

“Because of the nature of the industry, workers work in isolation,” said Priscilla Gonzalez, the organizing coordinator for Domestic Workers United. “It’s important to have some sort of collective body that unifies all of the workers, so that they can exercise their rights together, and the co-op model gives them that collective power.”

On the first Sunday of each month, Chávez spends her afternoon cleaning the staircase of a six-story residential building located at South Oxford Street and Lafayette Avenue in Fort Greene.

Dressed in blue jeans, old sneakers and a red bandana to hold back her thick black

hair, she sweeps the tiled steps with a broom and then cleans them again with a mop, leaving the smell of citrus in her wake.

While cooperative members only use environmentally friendly cleaning products, Chávez always wears a pair of latex gloves and a face mask to avoid coming into contact with dust and fumes.

We Can Do It! currently has around 200 clients, a number that cooperative members hope to expand through increased publicity efforts and promotion via word-of-mouth.

Gwen Kash turned to the cooperative to clean her house after she had ankle surgery a couple months ago.

“Monica, the person who helped us, is wonderful, she cleaned the house perfectly,” Kash said. “There is a contract in the beginning so there are no misunderstandings with the payment methods; it is a very fair system.”

In early July, We Can Do It! formed a cooperative corporation, which will provide legal protections for the workers.

“It [the cooperative] gives them tacit legitimacy; they feel more secure about their working status,” said Gowri Krishna, a staff attorney at the Urban Justice Center who oversaw the incorporation process.

Domestic workers are not covered by most labor laws, including the Fair Labor Standards Act, which regulates minimum wages and overtime pay, and the Occupational Safety and Health Act, which protects workers from hazardous working conditions. Forming cooperatives allows them to bargain collectively for better wages and workplace safety.

According to a 2006 survey by Domestic Workers United, domestic workers are predominantly immigrants and women of color.

Chávez, who joined We Can Do It! in 2008, has 10 regular customers and hopes to continue working with the cooperative in the future. “I’m very happy with this job,” Chávez said. “It lets me sustain my family and still have time for myself.”

## Textile Mill Legend Dies

BY JOHN TARLETON

The North Carolina union organizer who was the inspiration for the movie *Norma Rae* died Sept. 11 of brain cancer after a battle with her insurance company, which delayed her treatment. She was 68.

Crystal Lee Sutton, formerly Crystal Lee Jordan, was fired from her job folding towels at the J.P. Stevens textile plant in her hometown of Roanoke Rapids, N.C., for trying to organize a union in the early 1970s. Her last action at the plant — writing the word “UNION” on a piece of cardboard and standing on her work table, leading her co-workers to turn off their machines in solidarity — was memorialized by actress Sally Field in the 1979 film.

Several years ago, Sutton was diagnosed with meningioma, a type of cancer of the ner-



vous system. While such cancers are typically slow-growing, Sutton’s was not — and she went two months without potentially life-saving medication because her insurance balked at covering it. Sutton told the *Burlington Times-News* (N.C.) last year that the insurer’s behavior was an example of abuse of the working poor:

“How in the world can it take so long to find out [whether they would cover the medicine or not] when it could be a matter of life or death?” Sutton said. “It is almost like, in a way, committing murder.”

*The full version of this article originally appeared at [southernstudies.org](http://southernstudies.org).*



# What's Left Is Right

BY ARUN GUPTA

Despite appearances, the Obama administration has a clear strategy regarding healthcare: it is state-supported capitalism or, more simply, privatization.

It may seem counter intuitive, when town hall mobs shriek about Obama's communist healthcare policy. But the White House is nothing if not consistent. Virtually every one of its economic policies — the bank and auto bailouts, the stimulus package, cap-and-trade energy plan, Social Security, the home owner rescue, education and healthcare — hews to neoliberal orthodoxy of privatization, deregulation, liberalizing capital flows and individual responsibility.

How did it come to this, where disgruntled white reactionaries are the ones in the streets, the Democratic Party and a "transformative" president are waging upper-class warfare, a defeated Republican Party has been reborn, and liberals and progressives are paralyzed, not wanting to support a terrible healthcare plan while unsure how to respond to the racist vitriol being unleashed?

It's the inevitable outcome of the defeat and splintering of the left in the 1970s and the simultaneous rise of the new right that joined social conservatives with economic conservatives by using culture wars as a cover for neoliberalism.

## CLASS MATTERS

By the mid-1970s, the share of income and wealth going to the richest Americans was at a low point for the 20th century. At the same time, muscular workers' movements were demanding better wages and benefits, while 1960s-era social movements were agitating for their share of the pie.

The right had already learned to use racial scapegoating to convince many whites to vote against their material interests. Richard Nixon first used race-based appeals to win the White House, but Ronald Reagan combined it with a project of class restoration.

The Reagan revolution also expanded on Nixon's Southern Strategy with the Moral Majority, targeting feminists, abortion, godlessness and gays to stir up white resentment.

Today's Tea Parties are tied to the new right foundations, think tanks, media and grassroots groups that were incubated in the 1970s. But how did the Republicans enlist the white working class as the shock troops in their own destruction?

This is where neoconservatives come in. Neoliberalism is about freeing up capital to maximize profit, the freedom to exploit anywhere, anytime, anyhow. It requires a strong state for policing and surveillance, to keep the population in a state of economic anxiety, and to transfer public wealth to the rich and corporations, and laws and regulations to

prevent worker organizing.

There is a fundamental problem, however, as David Harvey explains in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, "The anarchy of the market, of competition and of unbridled individualism ... generates a situation that becomes increasingly ungovernable."

Neoconservatism bridges neoliberalism and social conservatives by using deep-rooted themes of nationalism, moralism and militarism to mobilize support of "the neoliberal agenda of elite governance, mistrust of democracy and maintenance of market freedoms."

The right invokes the threat from within and without — communism, immigrants, Muslims, terrorists. It wages culture wars against permissiveness, typically demonizing sexual freedom, expression and orientation, and appeals to family values, Christian evangelicalism, traditionalism and patriarchy. Anti-intellectualism is rampant, both in contempt for evidence and logic and as a visceral response to the new "elites" — intellectuals, scientists and cosmopolitans.

Then, there is the red-white-and-blue free market, which is equated with freedom and democracy. Resentful whites are told they work hard, can be wealthy and should not have to support the parasitical "other." Many Evangelicals play a role by replacing the Poverty Gospel with the Prosperity Gospel — "the belief that God rewards signs of faith with wealth, health and happiness."

## A PARTY OF NONE

The Democrats don't stand for anything. As a party, they depend on social and political movements for votes — labor, women, Blacks, Latinos, environmentalists, peace activists and the LGBT community — but they need money from the wealthy to run their political machines and campaigns. Unlike the right, there is no narrative or ideology that joins these movements beyond a laundry list of demands. Thus, the mainstream of each movement pursues its narrow self-interest, never able to advance its agenda significantly in terms of legislation or policy.

Once elected, Democrats are obliged to pay off their funders by passing pro-corporate, pro-wealthy legislation.

President Clinton fulfilled the Reagan revolution with NAFTA, the World Trade Organization, downsizing government, ex-

panding prisons, slashing social welfare, passing anti-immigrant and anti-civil liberties legislation, and deregulating the media, electricity and finance sectors.

Similarly, in just eight months, the Obama administration has ditched the Employee Free Choice Act, blocked single payer, let immigrant-rights legislation languish, savaged the United Auto Workers, expanded the Afghanistan War, backtracked on promises to the LGBT community and said it will continue renditions and extend the Patriot Act.

Obama's response to Wall Street's self-induced catastrophe includes rescuing investment banks, large stockholders and auto-company bondholders, and stonewalling any meaningful regulation of the finance industry. His administration is eyeing cutting Social Security to close budget deficits. Its global warming policy, cap-and-trade, would give away billions in tradable permits to major polluters while creating a massive new speculative market in carbon trading for Wall Street. His education policy is to shut down thousands of "under-performing" public schools and replace them with charter schools as a way to decertify teachers unions.

Apologists say the Democrats can only do what is politically possible. This excuse ignores the fact that the right never worries about what's "possible," and it justifies surrendering to the Republicans on every issue.

Philosophically, the left needs to clamber out of its post-modern sinkhole of relativism and subjectivity and develop a unifying grand narrative of history. Practically, it also means remaining independent of the Democrats. They are not as vicious as the right, but because their base gets lulled into complacency, they can still do tremendous damage.



FRANK REYNOSO

## Obama Butches Healthcare

The heart of President Obama's plan is to cut funding for public healthcare, Medicare and Medicaid, and shift it to the private sector.

The day after Obama's national healthcare speech, U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said, "half the bill will be paid for by squeezing excesses out of the [Medicare and Medicaid] system. And there is \$500 billion to do that, and we're looking for more."

Under the plan released Sept. 16 by Sen. Max Baucus (D-Montana), chair of the Finance Committee, the government will use hundreds of billions in those funds to subsidize insurance for Americans with annual incomes up to \$66,000. They will have to buy insurance or face penalties of up to \$3,800 a year.

The Baucus plan defines "affordable" as 13 percent of household income, not including co-payments and deductibles. It allows issuers to vary premiums by as much as 650 percent based on age, tobacco use and region. So if a policy cost one family \$500 a month, another family could be charged \$3,750 a month for the same policy. The Baucus plan would open the door to taxing employer-provided healthcare.

The bill explicitly allows insurers to "limit the number of enrollees," in other words, deny coverage. And, according to the Congressional Budget Office, in 2019 there would still be 17 million people uninsured.

While the "Tea Party" mobocracy was created, funded and manipulated by the new right network, the anxiety is real: the Obama administration could unleash forces that undermine many people's healthcare coverage.

For example, the Baucus plan's standards are so weak that one *New York Times* commentator observed, "Larger employers could offer coverage with extremely high deductibles and limited benefits without penalty, which their workers would be required to take unless it was extremely expensive."

The healthcare industry is certainly happy. Starting in the spring, the White House has convinced insurance, hospital and pharmaceutical companies to forgo some future revenue. In return, the Baucus plan will force millions into the arms of the insurance industry. Drug companies will get millions of new customers, and hospitals will see fewer losses from providing care to the uninsured. Forgoing some revenue isn't so much a loss as an investment.

Yet the Obama administration is not doing the healthcare industry's bidding just out of ideology. It's about power politics.

Jane Hamsher, founder of the FireDogLake blog, explained that aides to Sen. Baucus told healthcare industry lobbyists last May their participation in "crafting a health care bill was contingent on them 'holding their fire.'"

The Obama administration had three goals in giving the healthcare industry the keys to the treasury. First, the companies would not advertise against the Obama plan, like the industry did with its infamous Harry-and-Louise ads that scuttled Bill Clinton's plan. Second, "Keep them from torpedoing vulnerable Democrats in 2010 so there isn't a repeat of 1994." And third, "Keep their money out of GOP coffers."

Healthcare reform is really being driven by bare-knuckled, backroom politics.

That's change you can believe in.

—A.G.



Even before Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th president of the United States, the internet was seething with lurid conspiracy theories exposing his alleged subversion and treachery.

Among the many false claims: Obama was a secret Muslim; he was not a native U.S. citizen and his election as president should be overturned; he was a tool of the New World Order in a plot to merge the government of the United States into a North American union with Mexico and Canada.

find people peddling bogus conspiracy theories about liberal secular humanists, collectivist labor bosses, Muslim terrorists, Jewish cabals, homosexual child molesters and murderous abortionists.

This right-wing campaign is about scapegoating bogus targets by using conspiracy theories to distract attention from insurance companies who are the real culprits behind escalating healthcare costs.

Examples of right-wing conspiracy theories include the false claim that healthcare

supposedly beleaguered white middle class of “producers” and encourage them to see themselves as being inexorably squeezed by parasitic traitors above and below. The rage is directed upwards against a caricature of the conspiratorial “faceless bureaucrats,” “banksters” and “plutocrats” rather than challenging an unfair economic system run on behalf of the wealthy and corporate interests. The attacks and oppression generated by this populist white rage, however, is painfully felt by people lower on the socio-economic ladder, and historically this has been people of color, immigrants and other marginalized groups.

It is this overarching countersubversive conspiracy theory that has mobilized so many people; and the clueless Democrats have been caught unware by the tactics of right-wing populism used successfully for the last 100 years and chronicled by dozens of authors.

The techniques for mobilizing countersubversive right-wing populists include “tools of fear”: dualism, demonization, scapegoating, and apocalyptic aggression.

When these are blended with conspiracy theories about elite and lazy parasites, the combination is toxic to democracy.

DUALISM

Dualism is simply the tendency to see the world in a binary model in which the forces of absolute good are struggling against the forces of absolute evil. This can be cast in religious or secular story lines or “narratives.”

SCAPEGOATING

Scapegoating involves wrongly stereotyping a person or group of people as sharing negative traits and blaming them for societal problems, while the primary source of the problem (if it is real) is overlooked or absolved of blame. Scapegoating can become a mass phenomenon when a social or political movement does the stereotyping. It is easier to scapegoat a group if it is first demonized.

DEMONIZATION

Demonization is a process through which people target individuals or groups as the embodiment of evil, turning individuals in scapegoated groups into an undifferentiated, faceless force threatening the idealized community. The sequence moves from denigration to dehumanization to demonization, and each step generates an increasing level of hatred of the objectified and scapegoated “Other.”

One way to demonize a target group is to claim that the scapegoated group is plotting against the public good. This often involves demagogic appeals.

white Christian men trying to ride the same horse.

Two versions of right-wing populism are current in both the United States and Europe: one centered around “get the government off my back” economic libertarianism, coupled with a rejection of mainstream political parties, which is more attractive to the upper-middle class and small entrepreneurs. The other is based on xenophobia and ethnocentric nationalism, which is more attractive to the lower middle class and wage workers. These two groupings unite behind candidates that attack the current regime since both constituencies identify an intrusive government as the cause of their grievances.

CONSPIRACISM

Conspiracism frames demonized enemies “as part of a vast insidious plot against the common good, while it valorizes the scapegoater as a hero for sounding the alarm.” Conspiracist thinking can move easily from the margins to the mainstream, as has happened repeatedly in the United States. Several scholars have argued that historic and contemporary conspiracism, especially the apocalyptic form, is a more widely shared worldview in the United States than in most other industrialized countries.

Conspiracism gains a mass following in times of social, cultural, economic, or political stress. The issues of immigration, demands for racial or gender equality, gay rights, power struggles between nations, wars — all can be viewed through a conspiracist lens.

Historian Richard Hofstadter established the leading analytical framework in the 1960s for studying conspiracism in public settings in his essay, “The Paranoid Style in American Politics.” He identified “the central preconception” of the paranoid style as a belief in the “existence of a vast, insidious, preternaturally effective international conspiratorial network designed to perpetrate acts of the most fiendish character.”

According to Hofstadter, this was common in certain figures in the political right, and was accompanied with a “sense that his political passions are unselfish and patriotic” which “goes far to intensify his feeling of righteousness and his moral indignation.”

According to Michael Barkun, professor of political science at Syracuse University, conspiracism attracts people because conspiracy theorists “claim to explain what others can’t. They appear to make sense out of a world that is otherwise confusing.” There is an appealing simplicity in dividing the world sharply into good and bad and tracing “all evil back to a single source, the conspirators and their agents.”

COVER OBAMA’S BACK, BUT KICK HIS BUTT Today, when you hear the right-wing demagogues whipping up the anti-Obama frenzy,

you now know they are speaking a coded language that traces back to Social Darwinist defenses of “Free Market” capitalism and to xenophobic white supremacy. The voices of Beck, Limbaugh, Hannity, O’Reilly, Coulter, Dobbs and their allies are singing a new melody using old right-wing populist lyrics. The damage they can do is great even if most of these movements eventually collapse.

The centrist Democratic spinmeisters surrounding Obama have no idea how to organize a grassroots defense of healthcare reform. That’s pathetic.

These are the three R’s of civil society: Rebut, Rebut, Re-Affirm: Rebut false and misleading statements and beliefs without name-calling; rebuke those national figures spreading misinformation; and re-affirm strong and clear arguments to defend goals and proposed programs.

That’s exactly what President Obama did on in his nationally televised address Sept. 9.

While keeping our eyes on the prize of universal, quality healthcare, we must also prevent right-wing populism as a social movement from spinning out of control. Since Obama’s inauguration, there have been nine murders tied to white supremacist ideology laced with conspiracy theories. It is already happening here.

Since centrist Democrats are selling us out, it is time for labor and community organizers to turn up the heat. We should defend Obama against the vicious and racist attacks from the reactionary political right, but we can have Obama’s back while we are kicking his butt.

Vigorous social movements pull political movements and politicians in their direction — not the other way around. We need to raise some hell in the streets and in the suites.

Chip Berlet, senior analyst at Political Research Associates, is the author of the recent study “Toxic to Democracy,” and is co-author with Matthew N. Lyons of Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort.



GINO BARZIZZA

Conspiracy Nation

BY CHIP BERLET

RIGHT-WING  
DEMAGOGUES REACH  
OUT TO A SUPPOSEDLY  
BELEAGUED WHITE  
MIDDLE CLASS,  
TELLING THEM THEY  
ARE BEING SQUEEZED  
BY PARASITIC  
TRAITORS FROM ABOVE  
AND BELOW.

Within hours of Obama’s inauguration, claims circulated that Obama was not really president because Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts scrambled the words as he administered the oath of office. A few days after the inauguration came a warning that Obama planned to impose martial law and collect all guns.

Many of these false claims recall those floated by right-wing conspiracy theorists in the armed citizens’ militia movement during the Clinton administration — allegations that percolated up through the media and were utilized by Republican political operatives to hobble the legislative agenda of the Democratic Party.

The conspiracy theory attacks on Clinton bogged down the entire government. Legislation became stuck in congressional committees, appointments to federal posts dwindled and positions remained unfilled, almost paralyzing some agencies and seriously hampering the federal courts.

A similar scenario is already hobbling the work of the Obama administration. The histrionics at congressional town hall meetings and conservative rallies is not simply craziness — it is part of an effective right-wing campaign based on scare tactics that have resonated throughout U.S. history among a white middle class fearful of alien ideas, people of color and immigrants.

Unable to block the appointment of Sonia Sotomayor to the U.S. Supreme Court, the right-wing media demagogues, corporate political operatives, Christian right theocrats, and economic libertarians have targeted healthcare reform and succeeded in sidetracking the public option and single-payer proposals.

A talented environmental adviser to the Obama administration, Van Jones, was hounded into resigning Sept. 5 by a McCarthyite campaign of red-baiting and hyperbole. Support for major labor law reform has been eroding.

With a wink and a nod, right-wing apparatchiks are networking with the apocalyptic Christian right and resurgent armed militias — a volatile mix of movements awash in conspiracy theories. Scratch the surface and you

reform will include government bureaucrat “Death Panels” pulling the plug on grandma. Another is the claim that Obama is appointing unconstitutional project “Czars” More fraudulent conspiracy theories are being generated every week.

The core narrative of many popular conspiracy theories is that “the people” are held down by a conspiracy of wealthy secret elites manipulating a vast legion of corrupt politicians, mendacious journalists, propagandizing schoolteachers, nefarious bankers and hidden subversive cadres.

This is not an expression of a healthy political skepticism about state power or legitimate calls for reform or radical challenges to government or corporate abuses. This is an irrational anxiety that pictures the world as governed by powerful long-standing covert conspiracies of evildoers who control politics, the economy, and all of history. Scholars call this worldview “conspiracism.”

The term conspiracism, according to historian Frank P. Mintz, denotes a “belief in the primacy of conspiracies in the unfolding of history.” Mintz explains: “Conspiracism serves the needs of diverse political and social groups in America and elsewhere. It identifies elites, blames them for economic and social catastrophes, and assumes that things will be better once popular action can remove them from positions of power. As such, conspiracy theories do not typify a particular epoch or ideology.”

When conspiracism becomes a mass phenomenon, persons seeking to protect the nation from the alleged conspiracy create counter movements to halt the subversion. Historians dub them countersubversives.

The resulting right-wing populist conspiracy theories point upward toward “parasitic elites” seen as promoting collectivist and socialist schemes leading to tyranny. At the same time, the countersubversives point downward toward the “undeserving poor” who are seen as lazy and sinful and being riled up by subversive community organizers. Sound familiar?

Right-wing demagogues reach out to this

RIGHT-WING POPULISM

Populist movements frequently adopt conspiracy theories of power, regardless of their ideological position on the political spectrum.

In her book *Populism*, Margaret Canovan defined four types of political populism. Populist democracy is championed by progressives from the LaFollettes of Wisconsin to Jesse Jackson.

However, the other three types — politicians’ populism, reactionary populism and populist dictatorship — are antidemocratic forms of right-wing populism. These were characterized in various combinations in the 1990s by Ross Perot, Pat Robertson, Pat Buchanan and David Duke — four straight





# THE MYTHS OF CANADA CARE

The Canadian experience proves that government-funded medical systems do not guarantee timely access to needed services. Ironically, while many Americans long for a Canadian-style medical system, that system is disintegrating under the pressure of market forces.

In Canada, provinces and territories administer medical care, resulting in 13 different payers with limited transferability of coverage. To reduce the cost of medical programs, provinces and territories determine who qualifies.

For instance, to obtain health insurance in Ontario (OHIP), which is the most populous province, one must:

- be a Canadian citizen or a documented immigrant;
- be a permanent resident of Ontario;
- be physically present in the province for 153 days in any 12-month period.

Visitors, transients, undocumented immigrants and refugees without status are not covered.

As a final obstacle, a three-month waiting period is imposed before coverage begins. The Ontario government website “strongly encourages new and returning residents to purchase private health insurance in case you become ill during the OHIP waiting period.”

In Canada, as in the United States, capitalists exert constant pressure to reduce social services. Bureaucrats measure “cost-efficiency” and achieve “cost-containment” by reducing the number of services provided, forcing health workers to do more for less and outsourcing to the private sector.

To keep costs down, medical school enrollment has been restricted to the point that Canada needs 26,000 more doctors just to attain the same physician-to-population ratio as in other developed countries.

Underfunding forces patients to wait for assessment and treatment, and half of Canadians say waiting times are longer than they consider reasonable.

To discredit all government-funded systems, advocates of privatized healthcare emphasize how long Canadians wait even though millions of uninsured Americans essentially wait forever. In contrast, defenders of Canada’s Medicare minimize the problem of wait times, making it harder to fight for more funding.

Furthermore, the longer the line, the more inequality grows, and the more pressure there is to develop private-sector alternatives.

Government-funded medical systems offer two important advantages: the cost of medical care is socially shared, so that individuals are not crippled by medical expenses, and medical benefits are removed from the employers’ control, so that workers can change jobs without fear of losing access to care.

## THE ORIGINS OF CANADIAN MEDICARE

Until the 1960s, both the U.S. and Canadian medical systems were dominated by the private sector. Charitable organizations provided minimal care for the poor. Regular medical care was reserved for those who could pay and for those whose employers would pay for them.

Canadian physicians and insurance companies vigorously opposed any reforms that smacked of “state medicine” or “socialism.” Neither business nor government supported access to medical care as a human right.

During the 1960s, popular

pressure grew for universal healthcare. In 1962, the Canadian Labour Congress made its preference clear: “We favor a system of public healthcare that will be universal in application and comprehensive in coverage. We favor a system that will present no economic barrier between the service and those who need it.”

Despite the grassroots demand for socialized medicine, where the state is both payer and provider, Canada’s Medical Care Insurance Act of 1966 established socialized insurance, a publicly financed, private enterprise system “free of government control or domination.” It took five more years to implement in all provinces.

In the province of Quebec, union demands peaked in the 1972 general strike. In response, Quebec incorporated medical services into a broad social benefits system, paid for and provided by the provincial government. The Quebec working class is rarely credited for winning the most comprehensive socialized medical system in North America.

## ROLLING BACK THE GAINS

The initial funding agreement for Medicare was 50-50, with federal and provincial governments sharing the cost. In 1977, the federal government dropped its share of medical funding to 20 percent. In Canada, the government pays 70 percent of medical costs, while individuals and private insurance companies pay the rest. (This proportion is reversed in the United States.)

The result was round after round of cuts to hospital budgets and other medical services. Medical care was still free, but there was less of it available. The more services were cut, the more individuals had to purchase insurance, pay out of pocket or go without.

In 1984, the federal government passed the Canada Health Act to reassure nervous Canadians that Medicare was safe. Universal access to medical services was guaranteed on paper, but no funds were provided to implement the principle, and politicians began to prepare the ground for privatized healthcare.

The Canadian medical system is cur-

By SUSAN ROSENTHAL

While the debate to reform the U.S. healthcare system often emphasizes differences with Canada, both nations are deeply divided by wealth and income, and their medical systems reflect those divisions.

In the United States, medical rationing is overt, based on the ability to pay. In Canada, rationing is more covert. Medical care is a legal right, but the medical system is too poorly funded to provide comprehensive services to all, so some people are excluded altogether, and access is limited for everyone else.

## GLOSSARY

By JAISAL NOOR AND ARUN GUPTA

**ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS** — The percentage of healthcare spending that goes to activities such as paperwork, administration, review and insurance underwriting. A 2003 study found that administrative costs in the U.S. healthcare industry accounted for 31 percent of expenditures, as opposed to 16.7 percent in Canada.

**EXCESSIVE COSTS** — The percentage of U.S. healthcare spending considered unnecessary. One study found that in 2003, around 28 percent of U.S. healthcare costs, or \$477 billion, were unnecessary, compared to other developed countries — even after accounting for differences in wealth and population health. Excessive costs include administration, profit, high prescription drug costs, lack of risk sharing, an emphasis on treatment rather than preventive medicine, poor medical record technology and “heroic medicine” and “defensive medicine.”

**HEALTH INSURANCE EXCHANGE** — An exchange, according to MSNBC, “would allow uninsured individuals and small employers to purchase insurance by shopping at a federally regulated, web-based marketplace similar to a travel website such as Orbitz. Purchasers would be given a menu of competing plans, mostly private-sector ones, but also one federally sponsored plan that would compete on cost and quality with the private-sector plans.”

**MANDATES** — All uninsured Americans would be required to purchase health insurance, and businesses with annual payrolls of more than \$250,000 would be obligated to

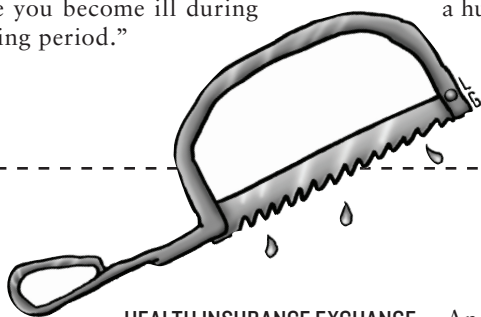
purchase insurance for full-time employees.

**MASSACHUSETTS PLAN** — Instituted in 2006, the Massachusetts plan aimed to provide healthcare to all residents. Three years later, half of those previously uninsured remain so, despite tax penalties. The plan fails to address the expense and rising costs of private healthcare plans and the program has faced a series of cutbacks.

**MULTI-PAYER** — A public agency offers universal healthcare cover-

age while individuals often purchase private plans as a supplement. *Forbes Magazine* claims 90 percent of the French buy private insurance because the public plan does not pick up 20 to 40 percent of healthcare bills.

**OBAMA ADMINISTRATION PLAN** — The plan has three parts. The first one involves rules that would end “discrimination against people with pre-existing conditions,” “limit” discrimination based on age and gender, prevent insurers from “dropping coverage when people are sick,” and other provisions dealing with Medicare, preventive care and out-of-pocket expenses. The second part would create a





# Fear and Anger in Staten Island

BY LAURA BOYLAN

rently so underfunded that the country's supreme court declared in 2004, "The Canada Health Act [does] not promise that any Canadian will receive funding for all medically required treatment."

Tens of thousands of nursing jobs have disappeared at the same time that hospital stays have been cut, so that fewer nurses care for much sicker patients. Deadly infectious diseases sweep through hospitals that no longer have enough cleaning staff. Most rehabilitation and chronic-care facilities have closed or gone private, transferring the burden of caring for the infirm to their families.

Hospital out-patient clinics have closed, and discharged hospital patients are now directed to family doctors for followup. But there are not enough doctors to meet the demand. By 2006, fewer than 10 percent of Ontario family doctors were accepting new patients. Currently, five million Canadians (one in six) have no family doctor. Patients can wait weeks to see a doctor, months to see a specialist and many more months for treatment.

## A FIGHTING LABOR MOVEMENT

It took a revolution in France to scare Germany into establishing Europe's first national medical plan in 1883. In Britain, the National Insurance Act of 1911 was rushed through Parliament during a strike wave. And Canadian Medicare was consolidated in 1972, the year of the Quebec General Strike.

The United States is the only industrialized country without a national medical plan, because the U.S. labor movement has been too weak to win it. During the Great Depression, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt conceded the New Deal, but excluded national Medicare. To quell the protests of the 1960s, President Lyndon B. Johnson conceded Medicare and Medicaid, but held the line on universal coverage.

If allowed to vote on the matter, most Americans would choose a universal healthcare system. For example, in November 1998 well over 70 percent of voters in Illinois supported a nonbinding referendum calling on state legislators to enact "a plan for universal healthcare coverage that

permits everyone in Illinois to obtain decent health care on a regular basis."

When profits matter more than human rights, however, medical care is rationed. People get only what they can pay for, or what employers, insurance companies and governments decide to give them.

The only way to provide medical care as a human right is to provide universal access, so that the CEO, the factory worker and the homeless addict would all receive the best medical care that society can provide.

Politicians who talk about universal access to medical care do not mean equal access; they mean that everyone should have some access or more access.

One cannot eliminate class divisions in medicine without also eliminating them in society, so capitalism keeps universal access off the agenda. We are not allowed to question whether medical care, or any essential service, should be rationed. We can dispute only the form and extent of this rationing.

Under our medical system, the priority is to cut costs, maintain profits and keep workers under control. We have class-based, treatment-oriented healthcare where the rich have access to the best services, the middle class and skilled workers have limited access through pooled insurance programs, and the poor are provided with a bare-bones assortment of government-funded services.

What we need is universal access with an emphasis on illness prevention and social health. That will take a fighting labor movement that rejects medical rationing, fights for universal medical care and keeps on fighting to end all class inequality.

*Susan Rosenthal is a practicing physician, author of Class, Health and Health Care (2008), and a founder of International Health Workers for People Over Profit. The full version of this article is available at [susanrosenthal.com](http://susanrosenthal.com).*

"There better not be any illegal aliens at that meeting," said a message left for organizers of a community healthcare forum on Staten Island. The forum took place Aug. 12 and was sponsored by the Staten Island Family Health Care Coalition.

Dr. Vincent Calamia, president of the Richmond County Medical Society, presided over a panel that included medical professionals, hospital and social service program administrators and a representative from the local Chamber of Commerce. Police were on hand because of the menacing call. I was one of the panelists, representing Physicians for a National Health Program, a group that supports single payer, or Medicare 2.0, for all.

The church where the forum was held was packed with 150 people. Most of the session consisted of audience comments. Dr. Calamia asked audience members to line up and limit statements to two minutes. Audience members were jeering panelists and interjecting comments throughout the discussion.

The first audience member on line commented on the weight of Rev. Terry Troia, a forum organizer and executive director of a nonprofit group that aids the poor. "This lady over here, she talked about preventive medicine, but she could lose some weight." He then challenged a physician on the panel who worked at a federally subsidized clinic, asking, "What is the percentage of your care going to people who are not citizens of this country?"

Anti-immigrant sentiment ran high. "There are 14 million illegals in this country getting healthcare without taxes. Tell me, why are they getting the same healthcare that we are?" was one comment. In response a healthcare administrator read from the text of the health reform proposal the section that excludes undocumented immigrants from subsidies. The proposed House bill, "America's Affordable Health Choices Act" (HR 3200), includes mandates to purchase insurance, insurance regulation, public subsidies for the purchase of private insurance and a limited "public option" that would be offered to the uninsured in 2013.

The panelist stood holding the bill aloft as audience members raised a ruckus, insisting she was lying about the bill. "That's not the language and you know it," one woman accused. A man stood up and jabbed the air with his finger angrily, "You know that's elsewhere in the bill.

You know it. You know that's nonsense." "Don't abuse our intelligence" called out another.

Order was restored and comments continued. One woman said, "Why give people who don't work at all everything for free? Everything: education, housing, healthcare, food, clothes." Another woman seconded her views. "I'm tired of everything falling on the workhorse. At some point the horse is going to lay down and say, 'Screw you, I'm going over to the other side to get free healthcare.' Why should I work if I'll only be penalized? Get government out of the way and we'll take care of ourselves."

The issue was as much worldview as healthcare. One man declared with passion, "This goes beyond the healthcare of Staten Island. We are looking at the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic of the United States."

The absence of Rep. Michael McMahon (D), incited considerable anger. Other politicians were not spared either. One man proclaimed to cheers, "Let Sen. Schumer and his wife use the same damned doctors that they want to push down our throats." Another issued a call to vote out current leadership: "Let's get the self-serving, lying, hypocrite, thick-skinned politicians the hell out of there."

Many called for an end to government programs, but there were also calls to expand them and much fear of reduced Medicare services. Several expressed anger about the exclusion of "hard-working Americans" from Medicaid, and another said, "I don't want the government to be involved in anything I'm in. I worked hard all my life and now I'm in Medicare and Medicare is going bankrupt and I don't know where I'm going to end up."

Eventually someone yelled out questioning Obama's citizenship. Right after that, one of the few African-Americans in the audience got up and left. In response to a story Rev. Troia told about a diabetic who had to have her foot amputated because she could not afford healthcare, someone called out, "Come on, she really couldn't afford the \$200 podiatry visit?" Someone else said, "Shame on her. She should have gone to the doctor."

A soft-spoken young man working with the forum organizers volunteered to give me a lift to the ferry when it was over. In the car he said he was for socialized medicine rather than single payer.

*Laura S. Boylan, M.D., is a board member of Physicians for a National Health Program Metro NY and a New York University professor.*

healthcare "exchange" limited to small businesses and individuals. The third provision mandates that the plan be "deficit neutral," that is, not add to the federal deficit.

**PUBLIC OPTION** — The Obama administration defined this as a government program competing with private healthcare providers, offering quality coverage and open to all legal U.S. residents. A robust public option could have spelled the end of many for-profit healthcare providers because of the government's purchasing power, lower administrative costs and elimination of profits. Under pressure from the private healthcare industry, howev-

er, the public option has been scaled back to a limited "exchange."

**RATIONING** — A term often used to disparage government-run healthcare, claiming services are limited by bureaucrats. Medical dictionaries define rationing as "planning for the equitable allocation, apportionment or distribution of available health resources." No medical system can provide unlimited treatment to any individual at any time regardless of cost. According to Media Matters, insurance companies already ration care by "restricting coverage of procedures and tests like MRIs and CAT scans ... denying coverage for pre-existing medical con-

ditions" and cancelling policies of people with serious conditions such as cancer.

**RECISSION** — Insurance companies often cancel coverage for patients with expensive medical conditions, claiming they misrepresented their medical histories. A recent memorandum from the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce noted that three large insurance companies admitted rescinding at least 19,776 policies from 2003 to 2007 for a savings of more than \$300 million. The memo added that this total "significantly undercounts" the number of recissions because of incomplete data provided.



**SINGLE PAYER** — Health insurance is socialized, as in Canada and Japan. A public agency oversees the financing of healthcare, usually through income and business taxes, but healthcare delivery is facilitated by the private sector, often nonprofit. The National Health Insurance Act (HR 676) would institute single payer in the United States.

**SOCIALIZED MEDICINE** — The government administers healthcare financing, owns and operates

the hospitals, and pays doctors. This system exists in England and Spain and is also how the U.S. Veterans Administration works.

**UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE** — A government-sponsored system in which all citizens are guaranteed health care. The United States is the only industrialized country that does not have this kind of system.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY LEO GARCIA.



# The Fashionable Recessionistas

BY MONA CHOLLET

The average man or woman on the street is a long-suffering mug. Having bailed out the financial institutions that turned our world upside down, we allowed them to wipe their slates clean. Instead of getting angry as our pockets empty, or trying to find out why, we make the best of things. We search the internet for bargains on stingy.com, barter, apartment-share and carpool, give up flying and use push scooters, treat ourselves only to five-Euro crisis menus, sign up for do-it-yourself courses, hoe our allotments and shop with money-off coupons.

But in return we have been able to rediscover the true values of solidarity, human warmth and the simple pleasures. In *Newsweek*, Steve Tuttle pays homage to his parents “who have been living the thrifty life all along.” Hard-working people used to be considered cheap, but they are smart now, he observed. Work and honesty are always rewarded; that is the moral of this crisis.

Who would have believed it? Perhaps you thought that the recession meant people’s savings going up in smoke, dispossessed families in the street, mass redundancies, the fear of what tomorrow will bring, unpaid bills and privation. If so, you were stuck in the materialism of a former age.

Those who criticize the injustices of the system should learn about the “anti-crisis spirit,” as revealed by the French *Marie-Claire* magazine: “We must consider the glass to be half full and not half empty ... When we keep expecting more from life we end up being permanently dissatisfied.” If that doesn’t work, try laughter yoga, “a technique that can be mastered in three or four sessions.” The key to everything is to be able to “alter one’s mental world.” As for changing the real world, we’ll worry about that later.

Articles in the French press tell us that this is the time for “intelligent consumption” or provide us with the “2009 guide to tricks and tips.” *The Los Angeles Times* provides the example of a young computer technician who is struggling to repay a \$50,000 debt and has decided to “open the blinds instead of turning on the lights” — now why didn’t we think of that? *Marie-Claire* lists the websites of ready-to-wear boutiques in

New York so that recessionistas (who have displaced fashionistas) can save on transatlantic flights. Ah, the frugal life.

*Elle* magazine instructs its readers on how to be in fashion without being fashion-victims by tagging their initials on T-shirts or threading beads to make “huge, bright necklaces that you can wear with everything.” The recession is frequently compared to World War II and so features thrifty housewives with a magical ability to create miracles out of nothing. *The New York Times* wrote about housewives in Springfield, Va., who set up a group “Frugal and Fabulous Moms.”

In “Austere times? Perfect,” about being thrifty and loving it, the paper also quotes Kellee Sikes, a Missouri consultant who has laid down the foundations for a new society by replacing paper napkins with organic cotton ones.

One of the many satisfactions we derive from being the victims of the financial crisis is being able to save the planet. “We must never waste a crisis,” enjoins Ms. Sikes. The Spanish daily paper *El País* upped the ante and told its readers: “There’s nothing like a heart attack to make you give up smoking.”

What if some of us don’t feel responsible for the current state of the economy? No matter, we can still mend our ways and make a virtue of necessity. Goldman Sachs bankers who’ve set aside \$11 billion for their year-end bonus just don’t

know what they’re missing.

It’s official: Ostentation is vulgar. Go for moderation, sobriety, even austerity. It is such a gratifying experience that even the rich want to have a go, though it must be said that food discount stores appeal less to them than the save-the-planet aspect. In the “Chic Ecologist” section of the French daily, *Le Figaro*, the travel writer Sylvain Tesson mocks the “sinister” and “moralizing” ecology of the Henry David Thoreau school. True ecology, he claims, is about reconciling man with the cosmos, and it should be a party.

Tesson advises people to “buy only virtuous objects” and takes his inspiration from the timeless wisdom of nomadic people. “I’m thinking of the cutlasses of the Kirghiz herdsmen, the leather pouches of Tibetan caravaneers or the Touareg camel drivers’ tea utensils.”

Consumers who can’t save the planet but still have money to spend must be allowed to feel that they are using their credit cards for a good cause. The luxury brands are falling over each other to convince us that they are cultural not commercial institutions. By buying one of their products you are not spending money but investing it. What’s \$1,200 for a suitcase when you know that in five generations your descendants will take it to a distant planet for the weekend?

In his plea for luxury in *News-*

*week*, Jonathan Tepperman transmits the delicate art of “economizing through value shopping”. “Start small. A Hermès tie, a pair of Church’s shoes ... Whatever you pick, avoid the vagaries of style and make sure you opt for a true classic that will age well.”

The important thing is to continue consuming. “Nobody wants the recessionistas to be replaced by depressionistas,” said the French newsweekly, *Nouvel Observateur*, with a shudder as it counted its advertising pages. So the press lists the products whose sales have gone through the roof since the crisis: condoms (another advantage of the crisis is its aphrodisiac properties), handbooks for learning how to cut costs, yogurt and bread-making machines, filters for tap-water, packs of vegetable seeds, and laxatives (yes, you did read laxatives).

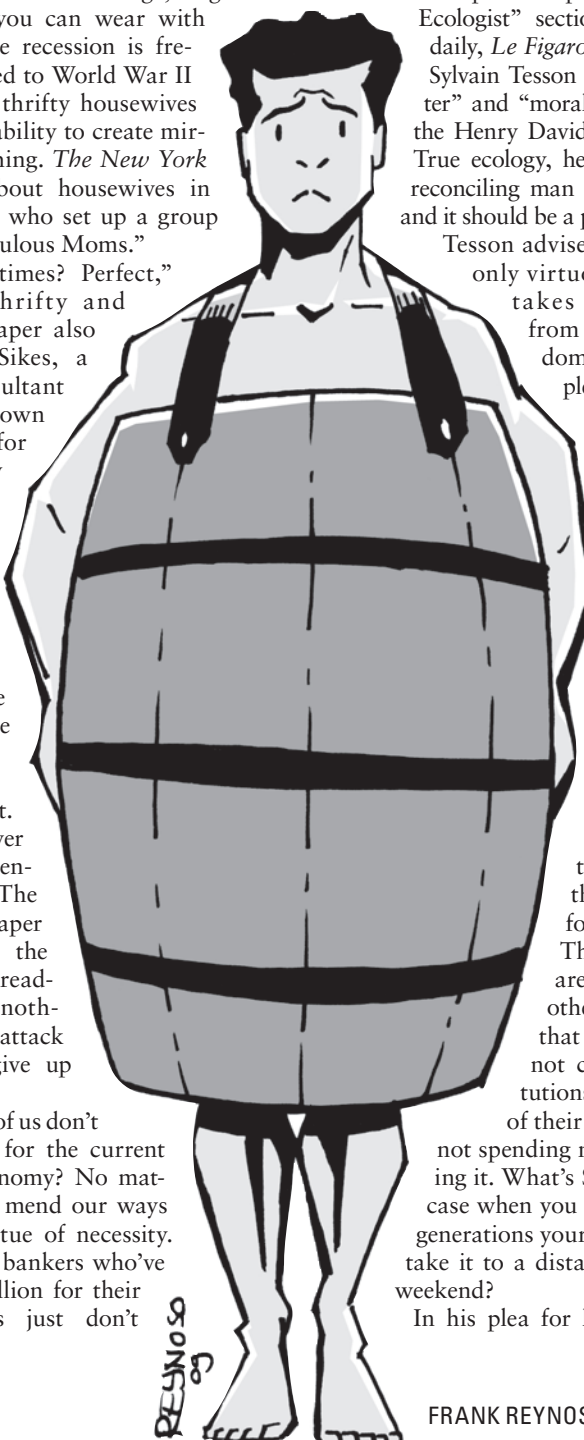
In *Challenges* magazine, a business periodical, the founder of the PriceMinister website, Pierre Kosciusko-Morizet, revealed why the private exchange and resale networks are being plugged: “When people start selling they end up buying more afterwards.”

Everywhere bad old reflexes manage to creep past the good resolutions. When a collective called “Save the Rich” (Sauvons les riches) sent advertising executive Jacques Séguéla the cheapest low-end Casio watch after his widely broadcast comment that “anyone who doesn’t own a Rolex at the age of 50 is a failure,” *Marie-Claire* gushed: “That’s a wonderful idea to take up, its 1980s, anti-bling appearance makes it a total cult object.”

Having donated his surplus shirts to charity, Tepperman decided that his social responsibility deserved to be rewarded. “But not by shopping. Unless, of course, you know of a really good sale ...”

“It’s a case of consuming intelligently,” said a trend analyst quoted by the *Nouvel Observateur*. Presumably living intelligently is for later.

Mona Chollet is a journalist and publisher of Peripheries.net. Translated by Krystyna Horko. Reprinted with permission from Le Monde diplomatique and Agence Global.



FRANK REYNOSO

## WHERE DO I GET MY COPY OF THE INDYPENDENT?

**BELOW 14<sup>TH</sup> ST.**  
Grand St. Settlement  
Pitt & Rivington Sts.

Bluestockings  
172 Allen St.

Housing Works  
126 Crosby St.

ABC No Rio  
156 Rivington St.

Jefferson  
Market Library  
Sixth Ave. & 9th St.

St. Mark's Bookshop  
31 Third Avenue

4th Street Food Co-op  
58 E. 4th St.

Think Coffee  
248 Mercer St.

Theatre for the New City  
155 First Ave.

**14<sup>TH</sup> TO 96<sup>TH</sup> ST.**  
MNN  
537 W. 59th St.

Revolution Books  
146 W. 26th St.

Housing Conservation  
Coordinators  
777 Tenth Ave.

Muhlenberg Library  
209 W. 23rd St.

**ABOVE 96<sup>TH</sup> ST.**  
Strictly Roots Restaurant  
2058 Seventh Ave.

George Bruce Library  
518 W. 125th St.

Countee Cullen Library  
104 W. 136th St.

Aguilar Library  
174 E. 10th St.

Uptown Sister's Books  
1942 Amsterdam Ave.

**BROOKLYN**  
Brooklyn Museum  
200 Eastern Pkwy.

BAM  
30 Lafayette Ave.

Vox Pop  
1022 Cortelyou Rd.

Parkside Deli  
203 Parkside Ave.

Tillie's of Brooklyn  
248 DeKalb Ave.

Tea Lounge  
837 Union St.

Video Gallery  
310 Seventh Ave.

Ozzie's Coffee Shop  
249 Fifth Ave.  
57 Seventh Ave.

'sNice Café  
315 Fifth Ave.

Verb Café  
218 Bedford Ave.

Videology  
308 Bedford Ave.

Archive Café  
49 Bogart St.

Sisters Community  
Hardware  
900 Fulton St.

Outpost Café  
1014 Fulton St.

Bedford Library  
496 Franklin St.

Pacific St. Library  
25 Fourth Ave.

Heights Coffee  
333 Flatbush Ave.

Myrtle Ave. Pharmacy  
329 Myrtle Ave.

Pillow Café  
505 Myrtle Ave.

K-Dog  
43 Lincoln Rd.

**STATEN ISLAND**  
St. George Library  
5 Central Ave.

Port Richmond Research  
Library  
75 Bennett St.

**BRONX**  
The Point  
940 Garrison Ave.

Brook Park  
141st St. & Brook Ave.

Mothers on the Move  
928 Intervale St.

South Bronx Food Co-op  
158th St. & Third Avenue

**FOR A COMPLETE  
DISTRIBUTION LIST  
AND MAP:  
INDYPENDENT.ORG**



# WHAT ELSE IN NY IS 100% FREE?

**FREE** Final Cut Pro Classes

**FREE** Video Studio Classes

**FREE** Video Production Classes

**FOR MANHATTAN RESIDENTS  
& NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS ONLY!**

Get a **FREE** show on one of our **FOUR** Channels

**Time Warner Channels 34 56 57 67**

**RCN Channels 82 83 84 85**

For more info visit [www.mnn.org](http://www.mnn.org)  
or call 212-757-2670 x340







**DEMOCRACY NOW!**  
**DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG**

Independent news hour  
with Amy Goodman  
and co-host Juan Gonzalez  
TV-Radio-Internet



**The corporate  
media got it  
wrong on Iraq.  
Tune in to the  
show that  
got it right.**

**PACIFICA RADIO**  
**99.5 FM WBAI**  
9am, Mon-Fri

**PUBLIC ACCESS TV**  
**CUNY-TV Channel 75 (All Boroughs)**  
6:30pm Mon-Fri, 1am Mon-Thurs  
**Manhattan MNN Channel 34/82**  
8am, Mon-Fri

**Brooklyn BCAT Channel 56/69**  
9am, Mon-Fri

**Bronxnet Channel 67**  
9am, Tues & Thurs

**SATELLITE TV**  
**Free Speech TV**  
**DISH Network Channel 9415**  
8am, Noon, 7pm, Midnight, Mon-Fri

**Link TV**  
**DISH Network Channel 9410 / DirecTV Channel 375**  
11am, 6pm, Mon-Fri

**DEMOCRACY NOW! EN ESPAÑOL**  
**www.democracynow.org/es**

**WWW.DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG**  
**Audio, Video and Transcripts**

**DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG**

# BRECHT FORUM

For social justice, equality and a new culture that puts human needs first.

## UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE BRECHT FORUM

**WED, SEPT 23, 7:30pm**

HONORING MILES DAVIS AND JOHN COLTRANE  
Live music, lecture and release of the book, *Clawing at the Limits of Cool*.

**THURS, OCT 1, 5:30pm-7:30pm**

10-SESSION HEGEL CLASS BEGINS  
Russell Dale teaches "Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit."  
(Tuition: \$95-\$125)

**MON, OCT 5, 5:30pm-7:30pm**

8-SESSION MARX CLASS BEGINS  
William DiFazio will teach Karl Marx's *Grundrisse*.  
(Tuition: \$75-\$95)

**WED, OCT 7, 7:30pm-9:30pm**

4-SESSION POLITICAL THEORY CLASS BEGINS  
Nicole Bratton will teach "The Presidency, History & the Left."  
(Tuition: \$35-\$55)

**THURS, OCT 8, 7:30pm**

THELONIOUS MONK BOOK RELEASE PARTY  
Readings from *Thelonious Monk*:  
*The Birth of an American Original* and All-Star Musical Tribute.

**FOR INFORMATION AND TICKET RESERVATIONS**  
brechtforum.org or 212-242-4201

**THE BRECHT  
FORUM**

*BUILDING A MOVEMENT THAT MOVES*  
451 West Street (between Bank and Bethune Streets)

## REVIEW

# Removing the Masks

*Developing Zapatista Autonomy: Conflict and  
NGO Involvement in Rebel Chiapas*

By NIELS BARMMEYER

UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO PRESS, 2009

The influence of the Zapatistas has gone far beyond the small state of Chiapas or even Mexico. Their message and political ideas have echoed around the globe, so much so that Oaxaca-based writer Gustavo Esteva writes that, "Zapatismo is perhaps one of the most important political initiatives in the world today." This is the starting point taken by German anthropologist Niels Barmeyer, who, "like most other internationals," went to Chiapas in the 1990s for a Zapatista fix, "drawn by notions of egalitarianism, communal living and independence from globalized economies."

Barmeyer relates how he was originally captivated by the dynamic Zapatista movement through his involvement in the left/autonomous scene in Berlin, which exposed him to ideas about participatory democracy and horizontal forms of social organization. Barmeyer put these theories into practice through working in solidarity with the Zapatistas in Chiapas, first as a human rights activist in peace camps and later as a volunteer installing water systems in indigenous rebel villages.

But as he methodically dissects his ex-

reconciling the language and posture of the actors (local, national and international) and the actual situation. So, for example, within the Chiapas solidarity and non-governmental organization (NGO) circles Barmeyer moves in, he finds that, "in order not to obstruct the efficiency of fundraising rallies and volunteer recruitment... critical overtones are often omitted and the proliferation of idealized images is perpetuated."

It is this proliferation of idealized images that Barmeyer deconstructs in this work. These idealized images are, he posits, forged in the writings of Zapatista spokesperson Subcommander Marcos and reproduced by solidarity groups and NGOs working in the region. The result is "rosy portrayals" that are "stunningly uncritical" in their analysis, more reflective of what the people outside want to hear than of the reality on the ground.

Taking a closer look at the much-feted workings of Zapatista governance — generally understood as an extension of a deeply rooted egalitarian indigenous culture — Barmeyer describes how, in practice, decision-making structures are often dominated by men, older community members, and those who can dispense patronage. "Autonomous administrative structures and the way today's rebel municipalities are run have little to do with Mayan heritage but are actually a hodgepodge of practices ranging from the Catholic cult of village saints imposed by the Spanish crown to the ejidal administration structures laid down in Mexico's Agrarian Law and organizational elements introduced by cataquistas (lay preachers) and Maoist students in the 1970s."

Academic texts are often turgid and difficult to decipher. Barmeyer's work (conducted in the context of a Ph.D course) is saved by a lively, informative and often witty tone. Caught between activist and academic camps, he is mischievous in his descriptions, as his friends become "informants" (informers, some would say), and his home in San Cristobal, where he invites Zapatistas to stay, his "center of research." Barmeyer befriends one local Zapatista — Cipriano, a self-described wild rover — and he and his extended family become the ongoing object of Barmeyer's research. Therein lies the dubious academic practice of befriendling people on the ground to study them.

Early in the book, Barmeyer describes how one local NGO operative refused to allow him to participate in the group's solidarity project, because he thought Barmeyer's anthropological research would injure the communities involved and provide fodder for the Zapatistas' enemies.

However, it can also be argued that an extensive and thorough investigation into the failures of the Zapatista movement such as Barmeyer's work can strengthen and consolidate the movement. Despite its devastating critique, *Developing Zapatista Autonomy* aims not so much to undermine the validity of the rebel project, but to dispense with idealized images. Instead of harboring untenable illusions or offering unconditional solidarity with revolutionary groups, Barmeyer's work allows Zapatista supporters to reflect on the development of the Zapatista project for autonomy so far. As the tide turns for the Zapatistas and they fall out of local, national and international favor, is the movement strong enough to respond creatively to growing criticism, both within Mexico and internationally?

—RAMOR RYAN

## Developing Zapatista Autonomy

Conflict and NGO Involvement in Rebel Chiapas



**NIELS BARMMEYER**

tensive research and experience in Zapatista communities since the uprising of 1994, Barmeyer's gaze moves from that of a bright-eyed solidarity activist to that of a dispassionate critical anthropological student, thus ensuring a rigid, unsparing and often scathing appraisal of his subjects.

Barmeyer's experience is not simply the familiar narrative of a white European going to a foreign land in search of the exotic other and finding only disillusionment and disenchantment. His is a careful study of a revolutionary initiative and its repercussions, specifically the problem of



# The Yes Men Speak

BY ARUN GUPTA

Since bursting onto the scene in 1999 as World Trade Organization (WTO) officials who would defend everything in the name of the free market — from vote-buying to supporting Hitler's economic policies and buying vouchers for human rights abuses — the Yes Men have re-imagined political theater for the digital generation.

They have gone on to pose as Halliburton, ExxonMobil and Dow Chemical spokespeople at high-powered business conferences, where they make outrageous proposals — such as turning the victims of climate catastrophes into candles — that are met with applause. Most recently, they presented an alternate reality with their edition of *The New York Times* that declared, "Iraq War Ends."

They have a new movie chronicling their adventures, *The Yes Men Fix the World*, and some elaborate new stunts that, unfortunately, we can't reveal. But *The Independent* was able to sit down with Andy Bichlbaum and Mike Bonanno, the mad geniuses behind the Yes Men, to talk about politics, comedy and Abbie Hoffman.

**ARUN GUPTA:** What are the Yes Men?

**MIKE BONANNO:** We all are the Yes Men. Yes Men are people who had enough and can't take it anymore. We've been Yes Men for too long. We've been letting the world be sold off. The Yes Men are people who are standing up against that.

**AG:** How did you get started?

**MB:** We got started by accident when Andy put up a fake website for the World Trade Organization in 1999 and people started writing for advice and questions. Eventually people started inviting us to conferences and we re-

alized we didn't have to be the WTO to go.

**AG:** Are you more Abbie Hoffman or Situationist?

**MB:** Abbie Hoffman... We are trying to reach people who are not political and mobilize those people who are. This is the moment to take risks, because Obama is president and we've just gone through the economic crisis, and historically, that's when things have changed. Like the New Deal.

**AG:** Tell me about a favorite prank.

**MB:** The real *New York Times* that

comes out every day is a prank. But the fake *New York Times* we put out after Obama's election got thousands of people to look at things a little differently, briefly.

**AG:** Why do you hate freedom?

**MB:** We are supposed to think that freedom is the same thing as economic license. In the United States, freedom is used as rhetoric, to argue for anything and really bad policy. If you asked people who supported Guantánamo why, they said it was to preserve our freedom.

**AG:** What do you think is the impact of what you do?

**MB:** What we have done really well is encourage other activists. We hear from activists who say, "We are so glad you're doing this. These corporations are not impregnable; they're not monolithic." We are having an incremental effect on the culture at large. We are trying to encourage more people to engage in direct action and to get in the streets.

The Yes Men Fix the World is premiering at Film Forum, 209 West Houston Street, Oct. 7-20. For more information, visit [filmforum.com](http://filmforum.com).



**OIL SLICK:** The Yes Men propose making "Vivoleum" candles out of climate change victims at a Canadian oil conference in 2007. PHOTO: THEYESMEN.ORG

## EIGHT YEARS OF STUNTS

Jan. 2001

While representing the WTO at a textile conference in Finland, Andy convinces attendees that the only way to maximize profits in modern-day sweatshops is constant surveillance of workers abroad. Andy then models the "Employee Visualization Appendage" — a gold leotard, complete with a three-foot-long phallus with a video screen at the end.

Dec. 2004

On the 20th anniversary of the Bhopal chemical disaster, Andy appears on BBC as a representative from Dow Chemical Company. He claims full responsibility for the tragedy

and announces a multi-billion dollar compensation package for the victims.

May 2006

Posing as Halliburton spokesmen at a trade show, the Yes Men demonstrate how a large inflatable orb-shaped suit, "SurvivaBall," can keep corporate managers safe from the ravages of global warming. SurvivaBall's features include "nutrient gathering capacities, on-board medical facilities, and a daunting defense infrastructure," to keep corporate profits flowing.

June 2007

At GO-EXPO, Canada's largest

oil conference, the Yes Men propose using the bodies of climate change victims as a new kind of fuel for the oil industry, known as Vivoleum. Posing as representatives from Exxon/Mobil and the Natural Petroleum Council, they hand out "commemorative candles" allegedly made from the flesh of an Exxon janitor who died as a result of cleaning up a toxic spill.

Nov. 12, 2008

Following Obama's election, the Yes Men, along with other



activist groups, hand out tens of thousands of a fake edition of *The New York Times*. Headlines include "Iraq War Ends," and articles in the paper announce the creation of national healthcare, a maximum wage for CEOs and a statement from George Bush admitting he committed treason during his presidency.

—ELIZABETH HENDERSON

revolution by the book  
 ak press publishing and distribution \* oakland, edinburgh, baltimore \* [info@akpress.org](mailto:info@akpress.org)

# MYTHMAKERS & LAWBREAKERS

anarchist writers on fiction

**THE BEST FICTION HAS ALWAYS BEEN DANGEROUS ...**

Now from AK Press comes an in-depth look at anarchist politics in the world of fiction. From acclaimed sci-fi storytellers to up-and-coming activist authors, these fourteen interviews explore how and why personal politics shape the fictional worlds we create.

Edited by *Steampunk Magazine* founder Margaret Killjoy, with an introduction by bestselling author Kim Stanley Robinson.

9780849350020 | \$12.00 | October 2009

Preorder your copy at [www.akpress.org](http://www.akpress.org) and get a 20% discount!

AK Press | 510.208.1700 | [akpress.org](http://akpress.org)  
674-A 23rd Street | Oakland, CA 94612

## PEOPLES' VOICE

*Grand Season Opening...*

**SEPT. 26<sup>TH</sup>:**

**PVC 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY Extravaganza**

★

OCT. 3<sup>RD</sup>: *Holly Near* AND *emma's revolution*  
*CD release party!*

★

OCT. 10<sup>TH</sup>: *Jack Hardy*

★ SATURDAYS AT 8 P.M. ★

Community Church of New York Unitarian-Universalist  
40 E. 35th St. (Madison/Park)  
New York, NY 10016

*doors open 7:30; space is accessible*

212-787-3903

[www.peoplesvoicecafe.org](http://www.peoplesvoicecafe.org)



# Hudson Is Not My Hero

## NEW BOOK PROVIDES LENS TO SEE MANHATTAN BEFORE 400 YEARS OF EXPLOITATION

On a recent warm afternoon, I contemplated the paradox of canoeing through New York City. After launching from an abandoned city pier in the South Bronx, we headed downstream with the tidal current towards a small spit of land near Roosevelt Island.

It is rare to find a place to touch nature in New York City as it has ebbed and flowed throughout time with little change. Feeling the current against my paddle, I drifted into a regular daydream, one I do not dare to own: What did this landscape look like before it was conquered by steel and concrete?

Eric W. Sanderson's book, *Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City*, has created this reality. After 10 years of cartographical and ecological research and computer modeling, Sanderson's team has reconstructed a picture of the Manhattan Island Henry Hudson's eyes would have seen Sept. 12, 1609, when his 85-foot long Dutch ship the Half Moon crept into the New York harbor in his expedition to find a northwestern route to Asia.

The 352-page coffee table book is a must-have for the beautiful full-page color computer-generated images that depict Manhattan exploding with green forests, estuaries, blue streams, yellow meadows, dark ponds, wildlife, and well, indigenous Lenape settlements. Also known as the Delaware, the Lenape people had occupied the coast from Pennsylvania to New York City for 10,000 years before Europeans blew in on boats.

"It is appropriate to ask whether we find descriptions like this incredible because we have lost the ability to believe in them," Sanderson writes.

Sanderson's adventure of piecing together Dutch and British maps with GPS data from original standing rock outcrops around the city is a thrill to read for New Yorkers familiar with his references. As a landscape ecologist at the New York City-based Wildlife Conservation Society, Sanderson deeply understands how all of nature's elements weave together into complex ecological systems — which became critical to piecing together Mannahatta's shattered puzzle.

"Using this data, we can make virtual time travel possible to see what Hudson could see, but not understand," Sanderson writes.

However, 400 years later, it remains clear what Hudson saw and understood.

"The landscape that Hudson discovered for Europe that day was prodigious in its abundance, resplendent in its diversity..." Sanderson writes. "If Mannahatta existed today as it did then... it would be

the crowning glory of American national parks."

The projected images of Mannahatta (Lenape for "Land of Many Hills") show that red-maple swamps stood where Times Square does now. The Lower East Side was a large salt marsh. Bogs filled Central Park and sandy beaches extended along the Hudson River from the Battery to 42nd Street. Twenty-one ponds, 573 hills, 66 miles of streams and old-growth forests reappear.

Sanderson's portrait of Mannahatta provides a lens to see why European explorer-capitalists would have drooled over this little island. That while his exploration did not lead to the East Indies like he had hoped, this location was surely as rich: "... skins and peltries, martins, foxes," Hudson promptly reported to his financiers when he returned to Amsterdam. Less than a year later, Dutch private traders, including the famous Adriaen Block (which a school in Flushing, Queens, is named after), launched profit-seeking fur expeditions into the area.

While *Mannahatta* provides us with beautiful pictures and descriptions, the book gravely lacks significant political, economic and historical information and analysis to explain the forces that transformed the island to what we recognize today. While exposing the original landscape of Mannahatta, Sanderson does little to reveal the true forces that razed this pristine island — capitalism, greed, genocide and imperialism.

A lesson hardly learned 400 years later.

### MAPPING THE ABUNDANCE

It would not take long for the diverse flora and fauna of Mannahatta to be hauled away to fill European coffers.

"Hudson's quest was tied into the historic current washing over the powers of Europe ... to reach around the globe: to discover, exploit, expand, to do business... this island would become a fulcrum in the international power struggle, the key to control of a continent and a new world," writes Russell Shorto in *The Island at the Center of the World*, a 2004 ground-breaking glimpse of the role of the Dutch in early American history.

Since the driving economic force at the time was beaver fur, which could be felted and made into fashionable Russian and English hats, these creatures became the focal point of European explorations into the area.

Just like the Dutch, Sanderson zeroed in on the beaver. Using the creature as a model, Sanderson explained how one species could be used to reconstruct an entire ecolog-

ical system: each animal is related to a myriad of other species and habitat elements that they require and provide. From there, his team developed probability maps for vegetation, soil types and animals that made up the islands' 55 estimated ecological systems. On page 203, he presents a map of the probability distribution for beavers across Manhattan. This is a map that Hudson would have loved to have, indeed.

Within 20 years of arriving to North America, the Dutch were already beginning to tear apart the island's ecosystem, which heavily relied on the beaver. Shorto writes that in 1626, a Dutch official noted goods arriving from New Amsterdam, including oak and hickory timber, dozens of skins from otter, mink, wildcat, rat, and some 7,246 beaver skins. The demand for beaver in the larger New England area bred conflict, inciting the Beaver Wars, the French and Indian War and several large intra-tribal wars.

As the beaver populations were extinguished in the eastern United States, fur traders slowly headed west, further into a continent already inhabited by millions of Native Americans as documented in Charles C. Mann's book, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*.

The Lenape did not fare well, either. New York City historians and CUNY professors Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace estimate that some 15,000 Lenape existed in the greater New York metropolitan area in some 80 settlements at the time of European settlement in their book, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*. The book *1491* documents the early pandemics that whipped along the New England coast after the arrival of European fishers and traders in the 1500s, killing an estimated 90 percent of the coastal native populations. The Lenape who survived disease would witness generations of colonization, as treaty after treaty with the new "Americans" moved them further west from the coast, first into Pennsylvania, then to Ohio, Indiana, Missouri and Kansas, then finally to Oklahoma in 1866 (another community exists in Ontario). In fact, 400 years later, Lenape descendants now living in Oklahoma (known as the Delaware Tribe of Indians) just regained their federal tribal status July 28, 2009.

### INSEPERABLE SYSTEMS

While Sanderson's book is quite an accomplishment in landscape ecology and urban history, it is, however, a dangerous read without understanding the historical political landscape.

Although Hudson is not solely to



(LEFT) COPYRIGHT ©MARKLEY BOYER/THE MANAHATTA PROJECT/WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY; (RIGHT) COPYRIGHT ©YANN ARTHUS-BERTRAND/CORBIS. COMPOSITE IMAGE BY MARKLEY BOYER.

blame, what happened after he left New York harbor in 1609 incited the now 400 years of colonization, exploitation and genocide from the Atlantic to the Pacific by the Dutch, English, French, Swedish and Spanish — and ultimately by Americans themselves. This is hardly a reason to celebrate the anniversary.

Mannahatta has certainly remained the island at the center of the world — largely because it was the cradle of the American industrial revolution and the financing of western U.S. expansion and exploitation, and, after World War II, for global capitalism. Literally everything that existed on the Lenape's traditional lands was transformed on a rapid and massive scale into a resource with value to sell, consume or destroy.

The landscape was forcefully altered by this way of thinking and being — which, like smallpox, slowly spread across the continent. Legendary Native American Movement founder and author Jack D. Forbes (who shares ancestry with the Delaware-Lenape) called this the *wetiko* disease, "the sickness of exploitation," in his book, *Columbus and other Cannibals*.

Sanderson attempts to make this point — in a silly marketing ploy —

at the end of the book when he imagines New York in the year 2409. He advocates that by instituting some changes (such as installing green roofs, eliminating cars, generating renewable energy and growing food locally) we can dramatically reform New York City. In a futuristic version of Mayor Michael Bloomberg's PlaNYC 2030, his ideas are simplistic and lack the depth necessary to understand the real history that shaped Manhattan.

What's the point of learning about Mannahatta's original landscape if the reader does not understand the forces that destroyed it?

"It is a conceit of New York City ... to think it is a place outside of nature, a place where humanity has completely triumphed over the forces of the natural world" Sanderson writes. "Yet this conceit is not unique to the city; it is shared by a globalized twenty-first-century human culture, which posits that through technology and economic development we can escape the shackles that bind us to our earthly selves ... As such the story of Mannahatta's transformation to Manhattan isn't localized to one island; it is a coming-of-age story that literally embraces the entire world."

—JESSICA LEE



# Homemade Culture

## PEOPLES' VOICE CAFE CELEBRATES 30th ANNIVERSARY

BY ELIZABETH HENDERSON

**P**eoples' Voice Cafe, a progressive coffeehouse located in the heart of Manhattan, is celebrating its 30th anniversary this month.

Founded in 1979, and currently housed at the Community Church of New York Unitarian Universalist at 40 East 35th Street, the cafe came out of the People's Music Network for Songs of Freedom and Struggle, a group of musicians, songwriters and music lovers who wanted to fuse politically aware music with social justice work — and to create local music venues throughout the United States to further these efforts.

"It's really inspiring to be a part of a community that cares so much about the rights of other people," Ray Korona, a folk music performer and long-time volunteer, said.

While the music scene in New York City has changed, Peoples' Voice Cafe has remained very much the same. Every Saturday night, there are politically resonant — most often acoustic folk — performances. New guests are



**TAKING THE STAGE:** The Ray Korona band performs at People's Voice Cafe April 2. PHOTO: RUTHIE INDECK

always welcome, and old guests find friends among audience members. No one is turned away for a lack of funds, and performers are paid fairly. Most important to the longevity of Peoples' Voice, each show is staffed by a group of dedicated volunteers who are involved in everything from booking performers and publicity efforts to baking treats for sale and running the sound system.

Charlie King, who has had an annual gig at Peoples' Voice since the cafe's early years, says that homemade political culture is at the heart of the cafe's work.

"Just like homemade cookies, homemade culture is kind of a hallmark of the cafe. When I went to coffeehouses, I knew that what they did was within my reach. When you go to extravagant shows, it doesn't feel the same way," said King.

Since 1979, the cafe has stayed true to its original intentions, as

stated in the organization's declaration of purpose: "We feel that the views of pacifists, anti-nuclear activists, feminists, gay people, minority and third world people and others have too often been denied a space. We wish to provide that space. Exposing people to socially conscious music is a key part of the cafe's mission."

Exposing people to politically conscious music is a key part of the cafe's mission. "Songs are very powerful and can affect people in ways that words and speeches can't — they jump the fences. If it's catchy and has a good chorus, they'll want to know more," Korona said.

The cafe's 30th anniversary celebration performance will take place Sept. 26 and will feature performances by Suni Paz, Charlie King and many others.

For more information, go to [peoplesvoicecafe.org](http://peoplesvoicecafe.org).

## READER COMMENTS

Continued from page 2

### A COMMUNITY LOSS

Responses to "Valerie Caris Blitz: A Life of Art and Activism Comes to an End," Aug. 14th:

In response to her death, I had to watch *Shadows in the City* again. Valerie was one of the featured stars in the movie. It was great seeing her at the top of her game. Valerie was a charm and a trooper right until the end. She was always beaming with positive, caring and a living-every-moment energy. Valerie's death marks the loss of one more of our magic warriors — the disappearance of one more of our courageous artists — and our tribe continues to get smaller. I mourn the fact that she is no longer with us in body, but we will carry her spirit.

—CLAYTON PATTERSON

I grew up knowing Valerie as the daughter of one of my mother's dear friends. It is sad to hear of her passing and I send the warmest thoughts to her family whose lives intertwined with my family's throughout the years. So much

of a person goes into the artistic process. Those pieces will live on through her work.

—JESSICA SCHLESINGER GRILL

### THE TAKEOVER OF MUSIC

Response to "Did Woodstock Kill Rock 'n' Roll?" Aug. 14:

I like the article but it seems to me to owe an awful lot to Robert Palmer's account in the PBS/BBC History of Rock n' Roll series [...] and the accompanying *Unruly History* he wrote. One thing put forward, I believe, on the never-released DVD on the MC5, is that part of the corporate follow-through to the lucrative nature of rock was a shift to having minor bands on major labels travel with and open for the big bands rather than having the reigning regional uber-band — the band that had survived making and being challenged in local/regional scenes/venues month after month — open. This killed the regionally distinct, hierarchical, super-competitive and explosively creative scenes of the 1960s. Add to that the racial and sonic niche-ification of everything that you men-

tion, the death of a number of the more synthetic musicians/bands and the rise of overwrought, overproduced and self-importantly flatulent art-rock listened to in seats at shows or with headphones at home and the glory of rock was tarnished — until punk, reggae and, dare I say it, disco got people out of their seats and into new creative and physical realms.

—APR

### TENANTS STEADFAST

Response to "Tenants' Voice," Aug. 14:

Sen. Eric Adams' (D-Brooklyn) comments are indicative of Democratic politics. Even a staunch ally of tenants uses his political stance for campaign cash. That is what ideals are for Adams and others — ways to extract political payoffs from landlords. Tenants have done well to stay in the face of their allies. The upcoming budget cuts are going to be draconian. What will the working and middle class of New York get out of this recession, anything?

—ANONYMOUS

## bluestockings

radical bookstore | activist center | fair trade cafe

172 ALLEN ST. • 212-777-6028

[bluestockings.com](http://bluestockings.com)

• • • • • WED SEPT 23, 7pm • \$5 Sugg

READING: DREAMING OF BAGHDAD. Iraqi writer Haifa Zangana shares her memoir, *Dreaming of Baghdad*, which recounts her life as an activist under Saddam Hussein.

SAT SEPT 26 • \$5 Sugg

MUSIC: ELECTRO-GYPSY. The Drunkard's Wife is a village wedding and the 1968 Paris student riot rolled into one. They provide beguiling punk bravado, suspect gender politics, disassociation as intimacy, revolutionary fervor and some dirty dancing.

WED SEPT 30 • \$5 Sugg

READING: PORTRAIT OF A DECADE: 1968-1978. Ellen Shumsky picked up a camera and caught revolutionary moments from the May 1968 uprising in Paris to Vietnam War demonstrations to New York's post-Stonewall era.

SAT OCT 3 • \$5 Sugg

LECTURE: FRENCH MUTINIES. Niklas Frykman "From Treason Take Away the T!" reveals that during the French revolutionary wars of the 1790s, hundreds of mutinies repeatedly pushed military discipline in Europe's war-fleets toward the brink of collapse — one of the largest, most radical frontline resistance movements in history.

WED OCT 7 • \$5 Sugg

READING: THE JOY BRED BY DISASTER. Author Rebecca Solnit reads from *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster*, which chronicles how in the wake major disaster, including Sept. 11, a wave of altruistic, generous and brave behavior shapes peoples' experience, rather than selfishness, chaos and hate that the media and authorities say happens.

For a complete list of daily events and to purchase a gift card, visit [bluestockings.com](http://bluestockings.com). Support your local bookstore!

**"Lovely, hilarious and seriously thought provoking—I enjoyed it tremendously."**

-Toni Morrison



In these beautiful essays acclaimed playwright and beloved actor Wallace Shawn takes readers on a revelatory journey through high art, war, politics, culture, and privilege. With his distinctive humor and insight, Shawn invites us to look at the world with new eyes, the better to understand—and change it.

 HaymarketBooks



# THE Nation.

Hosted by

Katrina vanden Heuvel Victor Navasky

## Salons

### What Will Become of the News?

Wednesday, September 23, 7:00PM

A conversation on the future of news, featuring:



**Dan Rather**, former anchor for CBS Evening News; managing editor and anchor of *Dan Rather Reports*



**Jane Mayer**, staff writer for *The New Yorker*, is one of America's most renowned investigative reporters and the author of the bestselling book *The Dark Side*.



**Marcy Wheeler**, a pioneering blogger and Hillman Award winner, writes for Firedoglake.com and is the author of *Anatomy of Deceit*.

moderated by Victor Navasky

### What Will Become of Our Culture?

Wednesday, November 18, 7:00PM

A conversation on the future of culture, featuring:



**Toni Morrison**, a Nobel Prize winning author, is one of American literature's most productive and powerful voices.



**Tony Kushner**, a Pulitzer Prize winning playwright, is one of the country's most celebrated dramatists.



**Walter Mosley**, one of America's most versatile and admired writers, is the author of more than 29 critically acclaimed books.

moderated by Gene Seymour

PETER NORTON  
symphonyspace  
Leonard Nimoy Thalia

2537 Broadway (at 95th Street), New York City

Tickets: ~~\$200~~ for each event (space limited)

(Admission includes cocktail reception, *Nation* subscription and signed copy of *The Nation Guide*)

[www.symphonyspace.org](http://www.symphonyspace.org) or 212-864-5400

Please take this opportunity to hear from and meet some of the most influential thinkers of our time in a post-event cocktail reception and to help ensure *The Nation's* continued survival and growth

All proceeds go to benefit *The Nation*.

